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William F. Buckley Jr. on the Meaning of Heritage

NATIONAL REVIEW

Al Gore, Head Case

BY RICHARD BROOKHISER

PLUS:

Stephen E. Ambrose: A Mistaken National Memorial
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NATIONAL REVIEW

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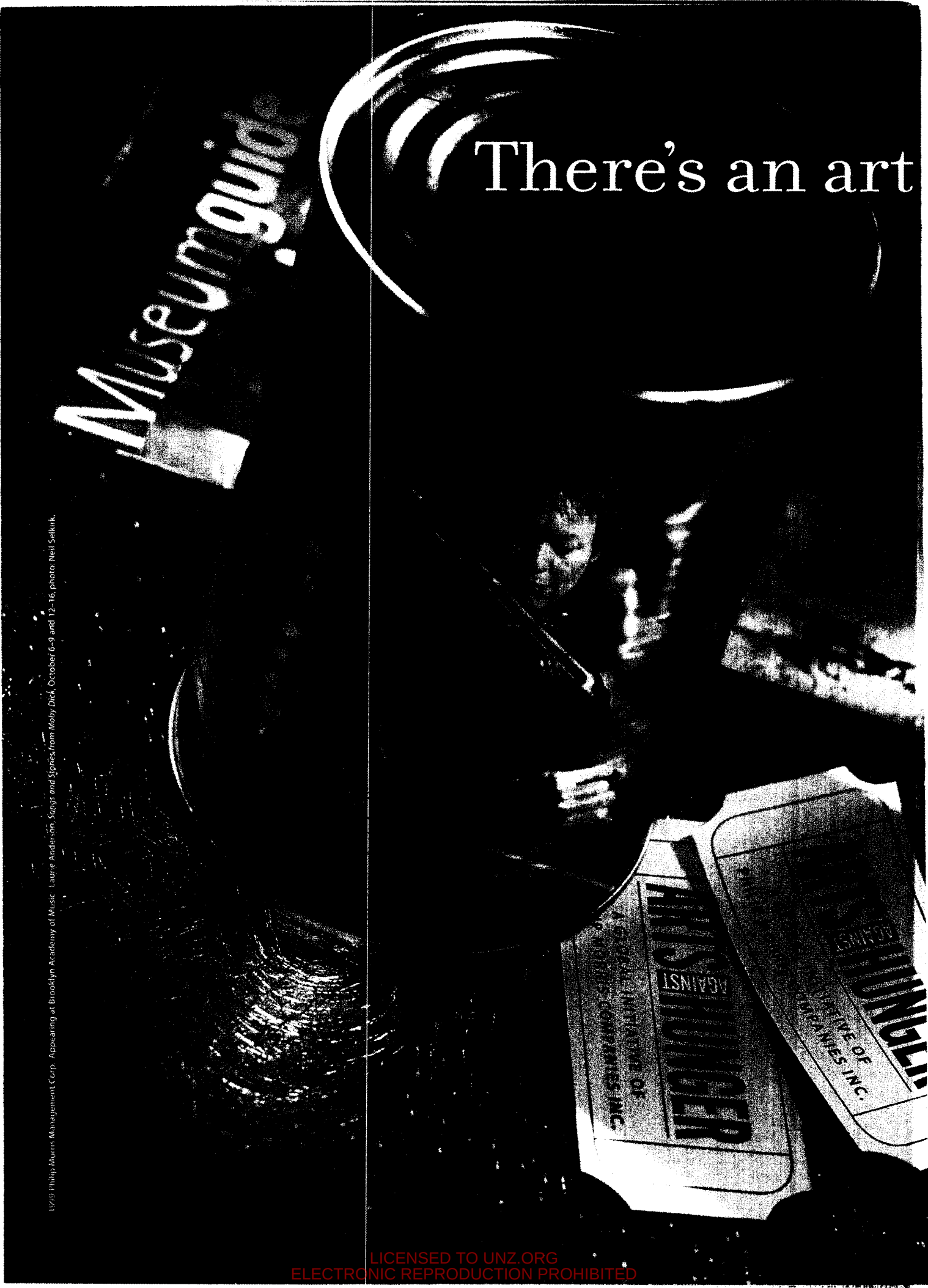
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■ LETTERS ■

'GOOD AND MORAL THINGS'

Gilbert Meilaender ("'Strip-mining' the Dead," Oct. 11) objects to "proposals to strip-mine the dead" by allowing the sale of one's organs. I wonder, though, if capitalism is really so wrong in this instance.

In our current "altruistic" system of organ "donations," the donors are the only ones who don't make money. Everybody else does. Doctors and hospitals charge substantial sums for the services involved in transplanting. The nation's 63 federally approved organ-procurement organizations collect an average of $24,000 per organ or $70,000 per cadaver. We have no shortage of the other life necessities—food, clothing, shelter, and even medical care—because we pay people to provide them. If we were to rely on altruism for these, they too would become scarce.

Organ shortages would disappear overnight if people were permitted to sell their organs upon death, to include them as part of their estate with the proceeds going to the heirs. The benefits of a market system in organs would be manifold: Fewer patients would spend expensive and painful years on dialysis waiting for kidneys. There would be no need for rationing, as supply would rise to meet demand. Transplants would be performed as needed, so patients would not risk deterioration, or even death, while on a waiting list. Healthier patients getting transplants sooner would increase survival rates, and the increased frequency would enhance surgical skills and knowledge. These, all good and moral things.

Daniel John Sobieski
Chicago, Ill.

GILBERT MEILAENDER RESPONDS: *The list of "good and moral things" we might try to accomplish never comes to an end. For just that reason, what we do is of greater moral significance than what we accomplish, and how we live matters more than how long. Selling bodily organs as commodities would help to create a society in which we ought not want to live—no matter for how long.*

NO-GOOD TREATIES

Your wholly convincing critique of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty ("A Just Defeat," Nov. 8) refers to "those treaties that are truly effective." That may have been generous, for I have yet to recall such a multilateral treaty.

The Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 "outlawing war" only encouraged utopian illusions. The 1930 London Naval Reduction Treaty limited British and U.S. tonnage, but didn't prevent Pearl Harbor. The League of Nations covenant didn't stop Mussolini or Hitler.

In the nuclear era, multilateral efforts have been singularly ineffective. Neither the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty nor the 1996 Test Ban Treaty stopped India and Pakistan from conducting nuclear tests. The recently signed land-mine treaty will not stop the laying of land mines.

History demonstrates that well-intended multilateral treaties are inherently flawed because they penalize law-abiding states and reward scofflaw or predatory regimes. Excessive confidence in such treaties is an escape from reality, and it downplays America's unilateral responsibility for peace and stability.

Ernest W. Lefever
Washington, D.C.

THE STORY OF ED

Conservatives just don't get it, as usual. All this criticism of Edmund Morris and his so-called biography of Ronald Reagan, *Dutch*, is free publicity for the book. The worst curse you could wish on Morris would have been to ignore him and *Dutch*—not give him nearly ten pages of your October 25 issue.

Robert D. Westgate
Washington, D.C.

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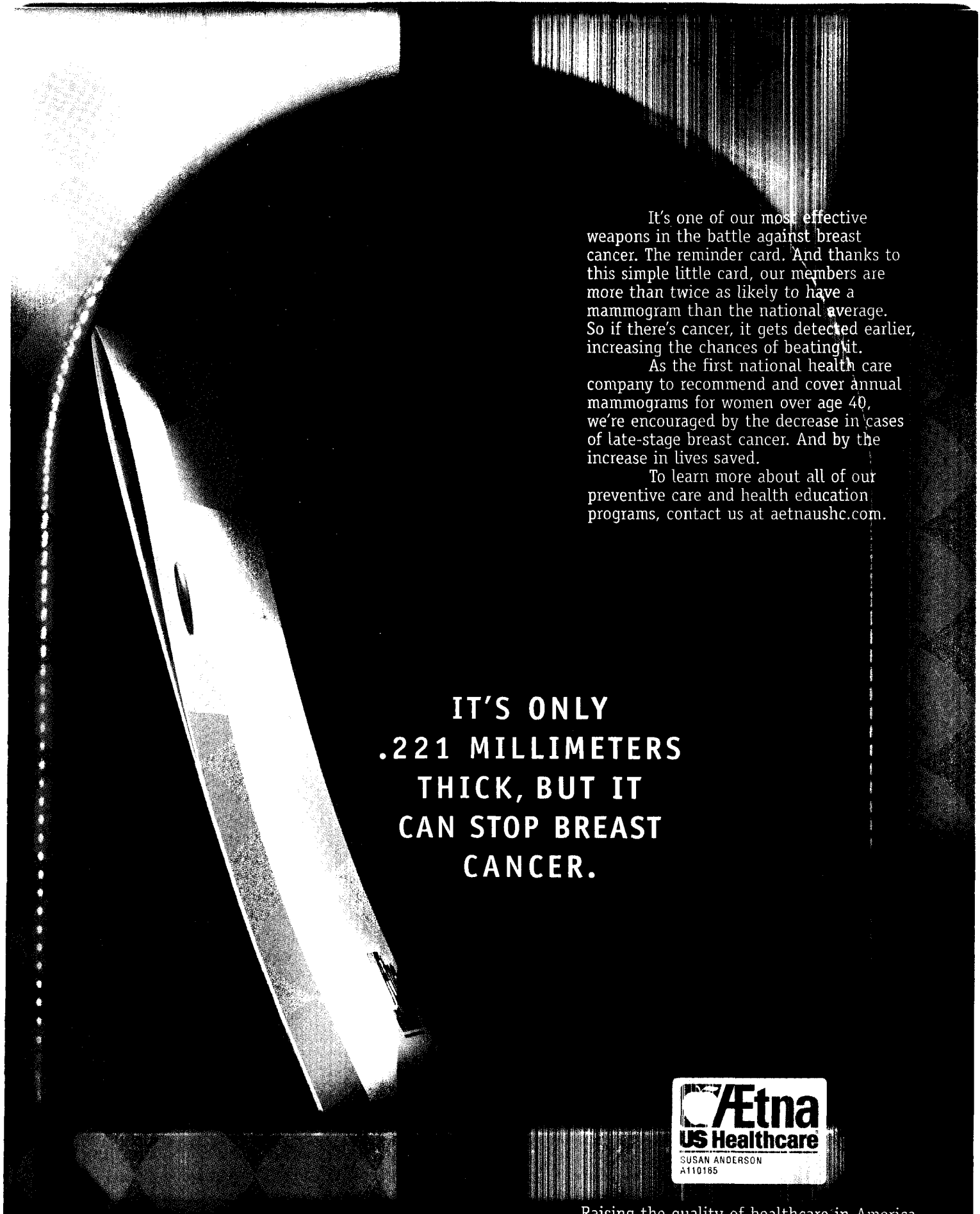

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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Clinton**, at fundraiser for Sen. **Ted Kennedy** (D., Mass.): "I'm not running for office, but I kind of wish I were." . . . Clinton criticizes GOP budget strategy: "If we were being attacked by space aliens, we wouldn't be playing these kinds of games." . . . Clinton, on whether he hurts **Gore**: "I think a lot of people who may not like me may hold it against him, but I don't think mature people hold one person responsible for another person's conduct." . . . Clinton, at fundraiser for First Lady: "The best gift I can give the American people now is to do my best to make sure that they know the person I love most in the world is without any doubt the ablest, most passionate, most committed, most visionary public servant I have ever known." . . . On night her favorite American League team wins World Series in New York, **Hillary Clinton** attends fundraiser 700 miles away in her native Chicago. . . . Next evening, on **David Letterman**'s *Late Show*, Yankee players and coaches read "Top Ten Things the Yankees Have Always Wanted To Say." Pinch hitter **Jim Leyritz**: "Take off the Yankee hat, Hillary."

■ **Bill Bradley**, during Oct. 27 town-hall meeting with Gore: "If I'm president of the United States, when it comes to urban public education, we're going to try this, we're going to try that, we're going to experiment here, experiment there." . . . Bradley on Sept. 9: "I decided to support vouchers on an experimental basis in several urban areas, in part to test the hypothesis of school-choice people, which is that it will improve public schools. Now we have [standardized] tests going on and I don't think those experiments are necessary." . . . In Iowa, Bradley says, "I remember the exact moment that I became a Democrat. . . . It was Democrats that stepped forward that evening in the Senate and cast their vote [for the 1964 Civil Rights Act] that washed away the stain of segregation in this country." Yet 82 percent of Senate Republicans (27 of 33) voted for the act, compared with 69 percent of Democrats (46 of 67). One prominent Democratic opponent: Sen. **Albert Gore Sr.** . . . *Boston Globe* quotes Gore mistakenly referring to late Sen. **Barry Goldwater** (R., Ariz.) as if he were alive: "I agree with him more and more as he moves to the center these days." . . . Asked which Republicans "could conceivably build bridges for you," Gore mentions Sens. **Ted Stevens** (Alaska) and **John Warner** (Va.). . . . **Kellyanne Fitzpatrick**, on Fox News: "Bradley versus Gore is like shopping for groceries in a Soviet supermarket. What's the choice?"

■ In Zogby poll, Sen. **John McCain** (R., Ariz.) leads Gore, 42 percent to 40 percent. . . . Self-financing of presidential bid forces **Steve Forbes** to sell control of his publishing company's voting stock. . . . California conservative **Bruce Herschensohn** endorses Forbes. . . . In New Hampshire, campaign headquarters of Gore, **Gary Bauer**, and **Alan Keyes** all housed in same building. . . . Sen. **Bob Smith** (R., N.H.) drops presidential bid, rejoins GOP. . . . U.S. Chamber of Commerce plans to raise $5 million for 2000 elections. . . . In NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll, 4 percent are more inclined to support candidates who favor campaign-finance reform, 1 percent are less inclined, and 95 percent don't care.

■ How *Washington Post* quoted **Douglas Johnson** of National Right to Life Committee describing partial-birth abortion: "pulling most of a living baby feet-first outside the womb." How the *New York Times* quoted Johnson, more fully: "pulling most of a living baby feet-first outside the womb, puncturing her skull, and removing her brain." . . . In Maine, two TV stations refuse to run ad supporting partial-birth–abortion ban because it is "inappropriate for younger viewers." . . . Rep. **John Conyers** (D., Mich.) sponsors bill to override state laws so as to secure voting rights for felons on parole and probation. . . . "You have always respected the truth and have never engaged in any misleading or evasive conduct or practice," says FBI director **Louis Freeh** in note to **Kenneth Starr**, according to *Newsweek*. "Your objective has always been the promotion of justice and the safeguarding of the judicial process." . . . GAO predicts decline in first-class–mail usage starting in 2003. . . . **Veronica Anderson**, director of Florida's minority-business office, resigns after using state employees, tax dollars, and public property to combat anti–racial-preferences ballot initiative. . . . Defense Advisory Council on Women in the Services recommends submarines be refitted to accommodate female crew members. . . . Kosovo operations have cost $5 billion, says Pentagon.

■ In poll, 20 percent of East Germans say they wish Berlin Wall were still standing. . . . House of Lords votes to revoke 800-year-old right of hereditary peers to sit in British Parliament. . . . Romanian parliament votes to compensate anti-Communist guerrillas in addition to political prisoners held by Communist regime. . . . Taiwan earthquake disrupts motherboard production, causing computer prices to rise internationally. . . . U.S. Supreme Court justice **Anthony Kennedy** on EU countries: "They've committed a tremendous amount of confidence, a tremendous amount of power . . . I think too much, to the judiciary." . . . British mercenaries say Syria is hiring, as President **Hafez al-Assad** and younger brother **Rifaat al-Assad** engage in power struggle. . . . Greek officials announce plan to rebuild Colossus of Rhodes, one of seven wonders of ancient world.

■ NBC's **Katie Couric** to **Jimmy Carter**: "You're kind of the **Susan Lucci** of the Nobel Peace Prize." **NR**

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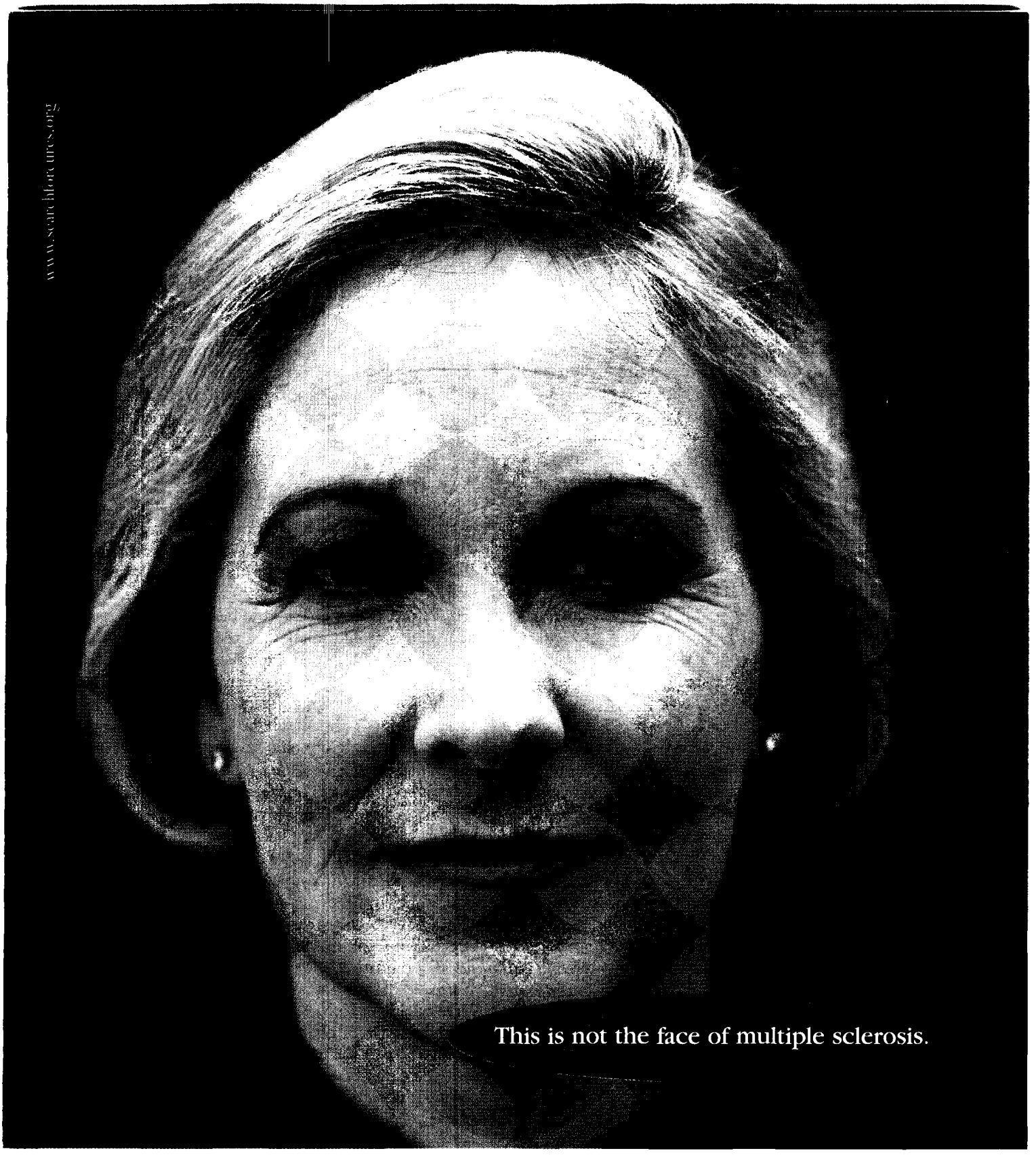

It's the face of Connie Pierce. She's married to her high school sweetheart, has twin daughters and a job she loves. She has also been fighting multiple sclerosis (MS) for a decade. She credits family support, a sense of humor and advances in medicines from America's pharmaceutical companies with helping to dramatically slow the progression of her MS. Pharmaceutical company researchers continue to make breakthroughs and won't stop until there's a cure. So people like Connie can live and love and laugh for years to come.

America's Pharmaceutical Companies

Leading the way in the search for cures

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THE WEEK

■ Naomi Wolf wrote a book called *Promiscuities*. And she's advising the *vice* president?

■ Manchester, N.H. (AP)—Sources close to Texas Gov. George W. Bush say that the Republican front-runner will not attend the Feb. 1 primary here because of a scheduling conflict with a Houston fundraiser. The event, headlined by Tejano singer Emilio and billed as "A Salute to a Conservative Compassion that Cares," is expected to raise nearly $2 million, bringing Bush's total fundraising haul to $100 million. Bush aides brush off criticisms that their candidate is "dodging" early caucuses and primaries. "Why do we want to get down in the mud with candidates who no one takes seriously?" asks one top-level aide, arguing that the "stature gap" between Bush and the GOP candidates actually competing in the early events only serves to cement the governor's lead in national polls. The New Hampshire announcement comes a week after Bush begged off the Iowa caucuses, citing a long-planned parachuting excursion with his father, the former president.

■ President Clinton began his recent budget meeting with congressional leaders by announcing that he and they had no quarrel over spending levels: Congress had already increased funding above his budget requests for scores of programs. Hundreds of programs will receive spending increases over last year's levels. Once Clinton vetoed a tax cut, it was inevitable that much of the budget surplus would be spent on bigger government. The only consolation is that, by pledging not to spend the Social Security surplus, Republicans at least restrained the budget's growth. This is as good a result as could have been expected, given that the Republican Congress has never made a sustained argument for limited government—not even in 1995, when the elimination of the deficit was the GOP's rallying cry. Republicans are justly congratulating themselves for avoiding another political debacle in this year's budget negotiations. But a tactical victory should not disguise a strategic retreat.

■ George W. Bush's newest ads boast that the governor has "reduced the growth of state government spending [in Texas] to the lowest in forty years." The Forbes campaign volleys back that "Bush makes Bill Clinton look like a fiscal conservative." The truth lies somewhere in the middle. The Cato Institute's fiscal report card on the governors gave Bush a grade of B and said "his record of fiscal restraint puts him near the top of the list of Republican governors." But that was prior to his latest budget—which increases state spending in Texas from $86 to $98 billion, a 9 percent increase over two years. Has Bush been a tax cutter? Well, sort of. Earlier this year, he took a $6.4 billion surplus, cut taxes by $1.85 billion, and spent the rest on schools, pay raises, and children's programs. Welcome to compassionate conservatism. There is, however, a difference between Gov. Bush and President Clinton, even this year: The governor signed a tax cut and Clinton vetoed one.

■ Vice President Gore was embarrassed to disclose that his campaign has paid feminist author Naomi Wolf a monthly retainer of $15,000. That rate was quickly slashed to $5,000 when it became public—Gore had tried to keep Wolf's name off federal-election reports by funneling the money through Democratic consulting firms—but the incident threatens to become a Joycelyn Elders-style headache. Wolf has written that adults should encourage teenagers to plot a middle course between abstinence and license, something she dubs "sexual gradualism" but that can be described more mundanely as masturbation and oral sex. (The Third Way in the backseat.) Her political advice isn't much better than her parental advice: Gore, she says, must abandon his "beta male" image by challenging the White House "alpha male." It's a bit late for that. The Man Who Runs With Wolf, Earth-Tone Al, is clearly being taken for a ride.

■ Virginia Republicans won control of the House of Delegates for the first time since the Civil War, giving the GOP control of the state from the governorship on down. The victory represents the culmination of a 20-year Republican trend in Virginia and a final vindication of the vision of the late conservative activist Dick Obenshain, who realized in the 1970s that the party would be revitalized only if it moved right and lured conservative voters away from the Democrats. Unfortunately, there were not many issues dividing the two parties this year. GOP governor Jim Gilmore neutralized a Democratic attempt to make transportation a cutting issue by proposing a $2.6 billion road-building plan of his own. But Gilmore still benefits from the warm feelings he engendered by killing the state's hated car tax in 1998—and the car-tax issue continues to percolate elsewhere. In Washington State, despite dire warnings from Democratic governor Gary Locke and various business leaders, voters passed an initiative repealing that state's annual tax on cars. This will keep some $500 million per year out of the state's coffers. In addition, the initiative requires that future tax increases be approved by voters in advance. The tax revolt still lives—at least if the tax man makes a grab for our SUVs.

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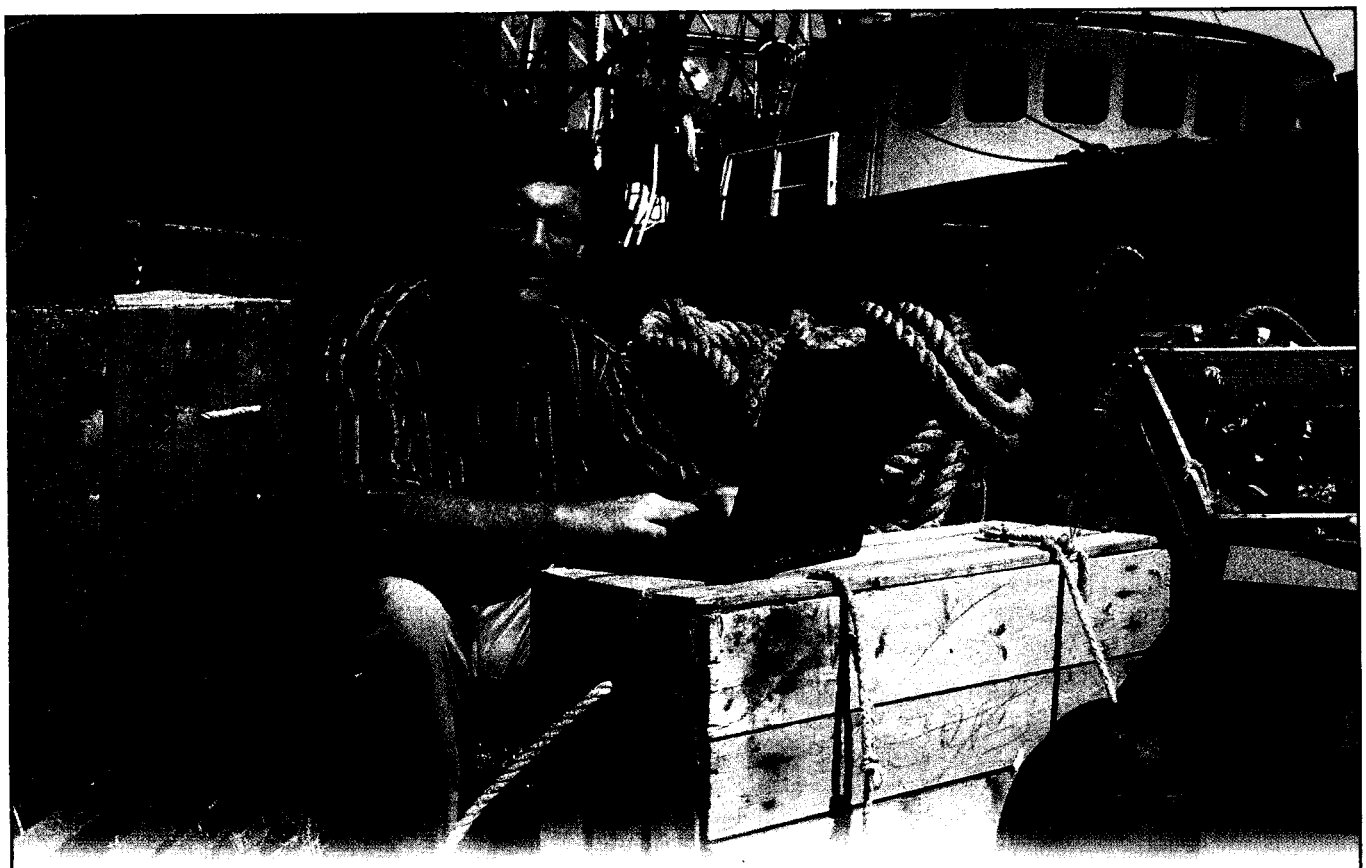

How do you keep track of 300 lobsters? With a mouse.

"I'm lucky enough to have turned my love of the sea into a business. And believe it or not, computers and lobster fishing go together really well."

Steve Burt, founder of Steven Burt Seafoods,® buys fresh lobsters from fishermen at dawn in Maine, and sells them in New York's Chinatown and outlets from Boston to Maryland. But how does he make sure his trucks deliver 40,000 pounds of lobster a week while it's still fresh? By tracking inventory, delivery times, and projected demand with Microsoft® software.

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The Bill and Al Show

Like Tweedledum and Tweedledee,
The Bobbsey twins, or peas
Assembled in a boring pod,
Who's who can be a tease.
The one distinguishing detail
Concerns the way they dress:
Al changes costumes daily, while
Bill's day wear is a mess.

—W. H. von Dreele

■ On St. Crispin's Day, anniversary of the battle of Agincourt, Pat Buchanan formally left the GOP to seek the Reform-party nomination. Will he do as well as King Harry? By leaving the Republican party, as well as the mainstream conservative movement, he loses the context that provided him with such a resonant sounding board. In his ancestral home, he could take it to the limit (on such issues as abortion and immigration) or smash icons (by supporting protectionism and union legislation). Now he is just one more bright guy with a high opinion of himself and a Hefty bag full of random policy positions. He also enters the force fields of different kinds of people—The Body, a libertarianish wrestler; Lenora Fulani, a black Marxist sectary; The Donald, a blowhard playboy. Most important, he enters the force field of Ross Perot, who seems to have encouraged him to switch. But four years ago, Perot encouraged former Colorado governor Richard Lamm to go Reform, only to stab him in the back. "The day of the outsider is over in the Beltway parties," Buchanan declared in his farewell speech; "the money men have seen to that." The money man in his new party has never let anyone outside of himself flourish in it. How long before Buchanan sees *that*?

■ Oregon voters legalized assisted suicide in 1994. The Republican Congress has just prohibited it. Has it therefore infringed on states' rights? Not really. The Oregon law allowed doctors to prescribe drugs for the purpose of causing death. But controlled substances are federally regulated, and Oregon voters cannot override this federal law any more than they could allow doctors to shoot their patients with assault weapons. Oregon will have to find another way to relieve the suffering of the ill—a task that Congress has aided by easing restrictions on painkillers.

■ Sen. John McCain, asked an intelligent question on medical marijuana at the GOP candidates' forum at Dartmouth, exposed the bankruptcy, not only of his own views, but of the political class generally. Marijuana, said the questioner, appears to have medical uses; if you favor upholding the ban on it, how do you justify the government's tolerance for alcohol, which generates staggering medical bills? McCain began with an irrelevant joke about industrial hemp (inaccurate, too: he implied that people smoke it). He said that "the moment" marijuana "enters your body, it does damage" (no more than alcohol, which was the point of the question). Then he conceded that "we have to do whatever we can" to deal with alcohol abuse, including "prevention" (a call for prohibition?). What it boils down to is that Sen. McCain is familiar with the grape, not the weed; though he was brave in combat, he is not brave or imaginative enough to give this problem serious thought; and none of the other presidential candidates is any better.

■ Sixty-three senators voted, once again, to ban partial-birth abortion, the killing of infants almost out of the womb. President Clinton will, once again, veto the bill. But the main obstacle to a ban is not Clinton or any other elected official; it is the federal judiciary, which has overturned most of the state bans, on the grounds that they are too vague. Now Judge Frank Easterbrook, writing for a narrow majority of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, has pointed out that those grounds are specious. State attorneys general have had no trouble identifying which abortions fall into the prohibited category; legal abortions have not been hindered. States should ban partial-birth abortion, and courts should get out of the way. When the Supreme Court finally takes up this issue, its duty will be clear—not vague.

■ Employers are not allowed to hire illegal aliens. But the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has announced that if some illegals get jobs anyway, they may not be discriminated against. In fact, illegal immigrants may now be entitled to back pay and damages if their employers mistreat them on the basis of sex, race, or religion—just as if they were citizens. The old American dream involved arriving in this country, getting a job, and working hard. The new one apparently entails coming here (illegally), finding work (again, illegally), and suing the boss (with the government's help).

■ When Communism gave way to democracy, many hoped that the Soviet peoples would live happily ever after. Today, Russian forces are closing in on Grozny, capital of Chechnya, bombing and shelling indiscriminately in a repeat of the futile events of three years ago. Ukraine is in the throes of a presidential election thoroughly rigged in favor of the incumbent president, Leonid Kuchma. A grenade attack wounded one popular candidate running against Kuchma. In the words of one respected Ukrainian political analyst, "democratic elections in Ukraine aren't happening this year." Next door in Belarus, President Lukashenko has run his opponents out of the country, and some have disappeared, KGB-style. In Armenia, gunmen broke into the parliament to shoot and kill Prime Minister Sarkisian, the Speaker, and several others, seemingly because they were attempting to resolve the dispute with neighboring Azerbaijan. Most probably paid by master-terrorist Osama bin Laden, several hundred Islamic fundamentalists are on the loose in Central Asia, in search of

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Muslim republics to destabilize. In conditions like these, any spark of violence can easily set off a raging forest fire.

■ The Chinese government is cracking heads again—and again they are those of Falun Gong, the large meditation movement against which the regime has declared a one-sided war. In July, Falun Gong was outlawed as an "evil cult." Its members staged silent protests in the capital, and were beaten and jailed for their trouble. Yet they persist. In late October, they came again to demonstrate, from all over the country, these gentle and peaceable middle-aged and elderly people, many of them women, who have no desire to involve themselves in politics, but want only to be left to practice their meditation. Government goons kicked and bloodied the protesters, and dragged them to police vehicles by the hair. The fate of Falun Gong members seems grim indeed. They are being tried and sentenced at a rapid pace. But their will to go on seems as strong as the will of the regime to hate and oppress them. And they provide an inspiring example of resistance to tyranny. Our own government ought to have a kind word to say to, or about, them; but there is no—absolutely zero—chance of that.

■ Whatever the larger successes or failures of Edmund Morris's *Dutch*, the book makes a number of specific arguments that are pernicious—none more so than Morris's belief that Reagan's health and competence were impaired by the end of his administration. Dr. John Hutton, Reagan's doctor in the White House, and Dr. Benjamin Aaron, chief operating surgeon at George Washington University Hospital, where Reagan was taken when he was shot in 1981, lay out the facts in letters to the *Washington Post*. Morris makes much of the claim that Reagan, on the operating table, received a transfusion of blood that was still cool from the hospital refrigerator, and that this affected his blood count eight years later. But blood temperature, writes Aaron, is a non-issue, and Morris's contention that there were long-term effects is "medically unsustainable." Hutton testifies that Reagan's recoveries from the four operations he underwent during his White House years were "extraordinarily rapid. . . . Morris has not demonstrated a complete grasp of President Reagan's health and medical problems, which he survived with ease and without disability." More easily, it would seem, than Morris is surviving his literary problems.

■ All right, all right, the New York Yankees aren't everyone's favorite team. Rooting for the Yankees, went the old saw, is like rooting for U.S. Steel. But anyone who enters the stands at Yankee Stadium rests his gaze on those plaques behind the outfield, memorials to Ruth, Gehrig, DiMaggio, Mantle. Yankee Stadium is to baseball what Wimbledon is to tennis, St. Peter's to Catholicism. The current world-champion Yankees are not the Bronx Bombers, not the Murderers' Row that included Ruth and Gehrig, or Mantle and Maris. This team hit a lot of singles, took advantage of opportunities, had strong pitching, and played tough defense. Perhaps above all, it was annealed into a coherent unit by the Buddha-like manager Joe Torre. In an era of gaudy home-run hitters and *SportsCenter* showboats, the 1999 Yankees were a testament to the power of quiet, steady excellence.

■ The obituaries of Sen. John Chafee (R., R.I.), who died at the age of 77, recorded a notable fact: Chafee, who was the scion of one of the oldest and wealthiest families in Rhode Island, fought at Guadalcanal and Okinawa in World War II, and fought again in the Korean War. Equally notable is that no one in his class thought twice about it. One can easily recall other young members of the WASP patriciate who served—George Bush, Elliot Richardson—as well as aspiring patricians like Joseph and John Kennedy. Devotion to duty does not guarantee good political judgment. But if the sense of duty ever entirely vanishes, what good will anyone's judgment be?

■ New York psychologists plan to unionize to cope with insurance companies and HMOs. Why not try the Teamsters? Then any patient with low self-esteem and $100,000 could meet with President Clinton.

CAMPAIGN 2000

Bush AWOL

SAY what you will about the slightly manic Al Gore or the shoulder-shrugging Bill Bradley, but at the recent Democratic "town hall" meeting in New Hampshire, they were both poised and informed. Their several decades' combined public service were obvious: These candidates are serious politicians, grown-ups. What if there had been a third stool on the stage that night, for George W. Bush? Would his frat-boy charm have seemed juvenile in comparison? Would he have been able to handle detailed questions about federal policy as deftly? Would he have been the political force of nature that his boosters make him out to be, obviously ready for the rigors of a presidential race?

The answer, of course, is . . . we don't know. Bush skipped the Republican event the next night. In this, he is obviously playing textbook front-runner politics: Don't get into a situation that puts you on the same footing as the also-rans. But Republicans should demand more of Bush. The party, collectively, has placed a huge bet on him, without seeing him perform in a high-pressure, unscripted environment. It is clear that he is pretty good on the stump, at fundraisers, and with individual reporters. It is not clear that he can deliver a message, and keep his footing, during a debate, a crucial indicator of the ultimate potency of his candidacy.

Bush's absence at the Republican town-hall event hurt him precisely because it played into the image of a candidate who has skated through much of his career on connections and good fortune, and who plans to try to do the same in the primary season, trading this time not just on his family name but on the near-unanimous support of the GOP establishment. Bush had also skipped the forum prior to the Ames straw poll. This is simply not good enough, and adds to the worries that he

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might not be ready for prime time. Al Gore (or Bill Bradley) isn't going to give Bush a pass, come next fall. He shouldn't get one now. At the moment, Bush has agreed to participate in only one debate this year, a December forum in New Hampshire. But that's too late (serious candidates, after all, have already dropped out of the race) and not enough—not to vet the party's presumptive presidential nominee.

Other, earlier debating opportunities could be arranged if only Bush would make it clear that he were available. This would not only be good for the party, it would presumably serve the Bush campaign's interests—taking some of the pressure off the December forum in New Hampshire. Back in September, rallying the American team at the Ryder Cup, Bush read a passage from a letter written by Col. William Barret Travis at the Alamo. It was a stirring statement of the importance of standing and fighting. It shouldn't apply only to golfers.

FOREIGN POLICY

The 'Isolationist' Slur

In the weeks since the Senate rejected the test-ban treaty, the Clinton administration has escalated its campaign to portray Republicans as isolationists. National security adviser Samuel Berger gave a big speech on "the new isolationists," who "believe in a survivalist foreign policy—build a fortified fence around America and retreat behind it." These are curious charges. To judge by their records during the Cold War and Gulf War, the opponents of the test-ban treaty had more internationalist vigor than the supporters. The grounds of the opposition to the treaty, moreover, were hardly isolationist. Opponents worried that the treaty would have *lessened* America's role in the world by undermining our ability to defend ourselves or our allies. To accuse those of us who opposed the test-ban treaty of wanting to retreat behind our borders is needlessly to alarm our allies.

So Clinton and his appointees must be using the term "isolationist" in novel fashion. At times, they seem to use it to mean nothing more than opposition to their policies. Thus, anyone who questions the merit of the International Monetary Fund, or who considers Kosovo marginal to the national interest, or who thinks our "strategic partnership" with China unwise—is an "isolationist." This reflex of the administration appears not to be an opportunistic polemical tactic but a genuine inability to conceive of an internationalism that is not liberal. It is of a piece with modern liberalism's tendency to see itself as the exclusive embodiment of open-mindedness, enlightenment, and progress.

This is why the administration's attack on "isolationism" has now come to include an attack on "unilateralism" as well. Unilateralism would at first glance seem to be the very opposite of isolationism: How can Republicans reasonably be accused of bullying the world and withdrawing from it simultaneously? For liberals, however, both foreign-policy impulses involve a chauvinistic concern for America's interests and freedom of action—as *The Nation*'s editorial on the subject puts it, for "discredited notions like . . . U.S. exceptionalism." From the liberal perspective, a unilateralist is simply an isolationist away from home.

Neither label fits most Republicans. The GOP has been more mindful of America's allies than the unilateralist caricature would suggest. The last Republican president moved with care and skill to forge an international coalition against Iraq; the current Republican Congress is more determined to protect Taiwan than is the administration. What Republicans will not do is forswear, by treaty or habit, the possibility of acting alone *in extremis*. They will not trust in some fictive "international community" to keep the peace, insist on its blessing for any American policy, or attempt to create it through paper declarations.

The administration would prefer to live in a dream world where the example of American pledges of self-restraint will cause North Korea to follow suit. To the extent the administration inhabits that world, it has withdrawn from the world around us. The current attack on the GOP exhibits the same strange isolation from reality. It is hard to believe that the Democrats can win the debate they have opened. If they continue in this vein, they may find themselves isolated from the public as well.

THE COURTS

Workaholics

There are 62 unfilled vacancies on the federal bench, and according to many observers this fact is a stinging indictment of our government. In August, President Clinton referred to "a mounting vacancy crisis in our country." Democratic senator Pat Leahy has described the insufficient supply of judges as a "constitutional crisis." In his annual reports on the state of the judiciary, Chief Justice William Rehnquist decries the delays in nominating and confirming federal judges. And now 56 current and former law-school deans have called for the vacancies to be filled quickly. The vacancies, they say, are "increasing caseloads in courts around the nation and affecting the lives of citizens whose cases wait in the federal courts."

There is a real constitutional crisis in America: the overweening power that federal judges have arrogated to themselves. The Supreme Court purports to "speak before all others" for our ideals; it settles many of the most important questions of our politics and claims a theoretically unlimited right to settle all of them. This being the case, the quality of our federal judges must take precedence over their quantity. Since all of President Clinton's judicial nominees share a grandiose, extra-legal view of judicial authority, none of them can responsibly be confirmed, even if there were a shortage of judges.

In fact, though, the "crisis" of an overworked judiciary is overblown. There were 97 vacancies at the end of 1992, but no cries of a judicial emergency; there were 63 at the end of 1994, when Clinton still had a Democratic Senate. The Supreme Court employs ever more clerks and hears ever fewer cases. The appellate courts are deciding more cases without issuing

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opinions. The chief judge of the Fourth Circuit has said that he is getting along nicely without any more judges; the Fifth Circuit has actually canceled some sittings, hardly a sign of a backbreaking burden. The federal circuit finds time for enough junkets that, in legal circles, it is called the "Bahamas circuit."

If the judges are in fact hearing too many cases, maybe the problem is not that there are too few judges, but that there are too many cases. Chief Justice Rehnquist rightly complains that Congress has given the courts unnecessary work by creating more and more federal crimes. But the federal courts have themselves to blame as well. The courts largely invented the sexual-harassment law that has generated 15,000 cases a year. The courts decided to get into the business of managing schools and prisons. They decided to manage the display of figures at city halls—to spend their time figuring out whether a Santa Claus is placed close enough to a nativity scene to neutralize the religious effect.

Nobody forced the courts to liberalize the law of standing to make it easier for people with no real claim of injury to bring lawsuits. For 20 years, the Supreme Court has said that individuals may file lawsuits to enforce many statutes that Congress never intended to be the subjects of litigation. The courts' hyperactivity in general encourages politically motivated lawsuits. And their refusal to lay down clear principles in many areas invites further cases to test just which racial preferences are acceptable, which restrictions are "undue burdens" on abortion rights, just how close to Santa that nativity scene has to be. Makework, not overwork, is the problem here, and the courts have the power to end it at any time.

The law-school deans do not believe that political struggles over the proper role of the judiciary should slow down the confirmation assembly line. They say they want to stop "politicizing the judicial-selection process." But that will be possible only when the courts' political role is brought within its proper constitutional dimensions. Not before.

BRITAIN

Lost Lords

PRIME MINISTER TONY BLAIR is busy breaking up the landscape. The latest portion to be consigned to the ash-heap of history is the House of Lords. Beginning with the Magna Carta in 1215—given a blip or two—hereditary peers have formed one of the chambers in the Mother of Parliaments. In the end, they had powers to advise and to delay, but not to reject legislation. Now they have voted for their own extinction, an unusual step for a constitutional body. A precedent that comes to mind is the French National Assembly voting to close down in 1940. "Long live the Republic all the same," shouted a handful of deputies on that sad occasion.

The House of Lords is not operating under the constraints of foreign invasion, of course. A politician rather than a dictator, Tony Blair merely resented that four in five of the hereditary peers were Conservatives. Intolerably embarrassing, they had to go. And they went quietly. A single romantic protested, shouting, "Stand up for your Queen and country, vote this treason down!" He was ejected.

Blair's ultimate purposes nevertheless remain mysterious. No clue has yet been given to the future composition of the House of Lords. In a process of horse-trading which nobody can fathom, just 92 of the 750 or so hereditary peers are to be allowed to retain their seats. Earlier this year, a commission was appointed to recommend the future shape and powers of the upper house. It is due to report by the end of the year, but Blair was in too much of a hurry to wait so long. Leaks from the commission reveal a deadlock about the future composition of the House of Lords. Some advocate a wholly elected upper chamber, in which case the 92 hereditary survivors will also be cast out. Blair and his supporters have apparently been pressing for a house of appointed members, who could all be relied upon to raise their right hands simultaneously, the way socialists like.

Logic intervenes at this point, to complete the destruction of tradition. If the hereditary principle is no longer acceptable for the House of Lords, the members of the royal family had better start working on their pension plans. A scene appears to be taking shape when the new Noble Lords will have no option but to shout, "Long live the Republic all the same."

RELIGION

Another October 31

THE maxim that ideas have consequences is illustrated with a vengeance by the Protestant Reformation, conventionally dated from Martin Luther's posting of his "95 Theses" on the Wittenberg church door on October 31, 1517. On the same date 482 years later, the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation signed a "Joint Declaration on Justification," the doctrine that was at the heart of the division of Christendom. The Reformation and the subsequent wars of religion in the 16th and 17th centuries almost destroyed the civil fabric of Europe, opening the way to the Enlightenment and its rigorous exclusion of religion from the public square, with the attendant divorce of faith and reason. In short, we are all living in a world that was largely shaped, albeit in maddeningly confused ways, by the

HELLO? AUSTIN?

As W. progresses like
Elizabeth the First
Engaging with the populace
As closely as she durst,
A doughnut-chewing John McCain's
Been rolling up insurgent gains
In one of dear old Dad's domains.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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protest of an Augustinian monk 482 years ago. The Joint Declaration is signed on the eve of a new millennium that Pope John Paul II has said must be the millennium of Christian unity, as the millennium past has been the millennium of Christian division. In the declaration, Catholics and Lutherans affirm that justification, which is simply another word for salvation, is entirely the gift of God bestowed by grace alone (*sola gratia*), received by faith alone (*sola fide*), because Christ alone (*solus Christus*) is the one mediator. The sticking point for centuries was over "faith alone." After the more than 30 years of theological dialogue that produced the declaration, Catholics agree that "faith alone" is not a problem, if it is a living faith that transforms the life of the believer; and Lutherans agree that a transformed life is indeed God's purpose for those who are saved by faith alone.

Secularists may snicker at what they view as theological quibbling, but they and all of us are embroiled in the questions of human nature, what has gone wrong with it, and whether there is reason to hope for the future—which is to say, we are all embroiled in the questions of salvation. The Joint Declaration does not establish complete unity between Catholics and Lutherans, never mind all the other Protestants, and it certainly does not restore the Christendom that was, which is just as well. But it is reasonable to hope that, in clarifying an idea that in its misunderstanding had catastrophic consequences, the signing on October 31, 1999, has contributed to the mending of a gravely wounded world.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Memo to: WFB
From: Rich [Lowry]
Re: New literary editor

Readers will like to know that, with this issue, Adam Bellow becomes NR's literary editor, replacing the excellent David Klinghoffer, who has gone off to the wilds of Seattle. Adam was for many years a senior editor, and later editorial director, at The Free Press, where he published a wide range of books, including such influential volumes as Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education*, David Brock's *The Real Anita Hill*, and Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve*. He was graduated from Princeton with a degree in comparative literature in 1980. He also studied classics and political philosophy at Chicago, and modern intellectual history at Columbia. In addition to his duties at NR, he serves as an editor at Doubleday and *Talk*, and is writing a book about nepotism. Adam lives here in New York with his wife and two daughters, and we are, needless to say, delighted to have him.

■ Memo to: WFB
From: Ed [Capano]

We have in this issue an ad for Brian Crozier's book—which carries your enthusiastic blurb. Our readers should be advised that Prima Publishing and National Review have undertaken a joint publishing enterprise, and that this book, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire*, by our former foreign-affairs analyst, successor to James Burnham, is the first in our planned partnership. The second will be your book of speeches. Details later.

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: An editor of a leading publication receives more letters and submissions than he can handle, and is faced with the task of separating the chaff from the wheat.

I thought you might be interested in learning how *Time* addressed this problem. Enclosed is the Editors' Circle sticker, to be attached to a letter from a favored correspondent.

I suspect my letter passed through a lot of hands. I was culling my files but thought I'd send it on to you, who probably have a bigger wastebasket.

Yours cordially,
Edward F. Halpin
Park Ridge, Ill.

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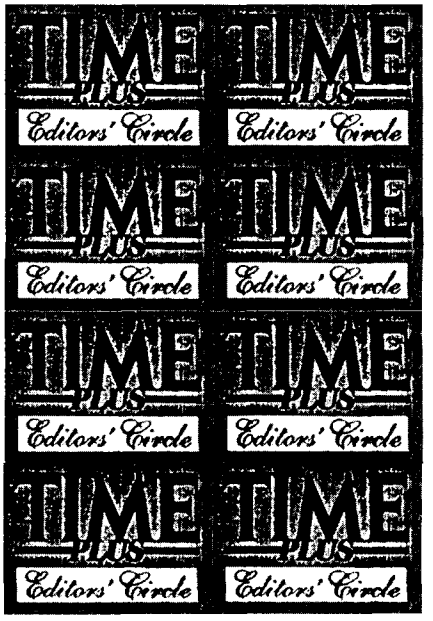

Dear Mr. Halpin: *Very* interesting. Rather like being given a key to the Express Elevator. Here at National Review we are more inclined to equal rights for all readers. Maybe there should be a law?

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I agree with you. "Why would she want to do that to her?" is much worse than "Why would it want to do that to it?"

Yours,
Charles J. Stormont
Sonoma, Calif.

Dear Mr. Stormont: You're pulling our leg, but it's fun.

Cordially, —WFB

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■ FOREIGN POLICY ■

The Clinton Tirade

An internationalist responds

JEANE KIRKPATRICK

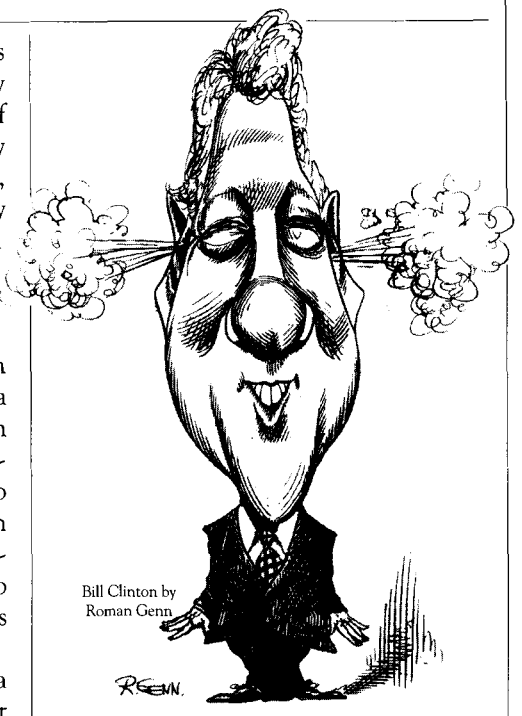
PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON and his national security adviser, Sandy Berger, reacted to the Senate defeat of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty with shock, pain, outrage, exaggeration, name calling, and something closely resembling a temper tantrum. Bill Clinton considers it His Treaty: He was the first to sign it. He assures us he will never abandon it. Never. Never.

Doubtless that was why he seized on the defeat of the treaty to launch a sweeping broadside against Republican policies on everything from the environment to economic security, education to Medicare. He charged Republicans with irresponsible budgeting and with abandoning "forty years of commitment to non-proliferation"—when no one has done any such thing.

He accused Republicans of "forcing" a vote on the treaty and of "rebuking" our allies. "We say, okay, you guys are with us every time we need you, the Gulf War, the Balkans, always in NATO, you're there, but you ask us to do something for your common safety, go take a hike." (I thought *they* needed *us* in the Balkans and in NATO, at least as much as *we* needed *them*.)

Above all, he charged Republicans with being purveyors of a "new isolationism" that is more dangerous than the old, and with seeking "to go it alone" at a time when we have never been so involved with the world.

Proofs of the "new isolationism" are: 1) refusing to pay our U.N. dues (though the blame for this can as easily and as cogently be attributed to the president himself); 2) refusing to fund "our obligations" to the Middle East peace process, which is to say, refusing to provide as much money as the Clinton team requests to fund the "Wye" accords; and 3) refusing to "do our part to stem the tide of global warming," although—to the best of my knowledge—no decision has been made that the United States should participate in this project, nor has the Kyoto Treaty from which such a policy might be derived even been sent to the Senate for ratification.



Bill Clinton by Roman Genn

Nonetheless, despite the havoc they have wreaked, the "new isolationists in the Republican party," the president assures the world, *will not* have the final word: "We will not—we will not—abandon the commitments inherent in the treaty, and resume testing ourselves." He calls on Russia, China, Britain, France, and other countries to continue to refrain from testing, and on Russia, China, and those that have not ratified, to ratify. It is possible that Russia and China may prove more obliging than the Senate Republicans—but don't count on it.

Sandy Berger makes parallel claims—equally sweeping, equally exaggerated. Given our military might, economic prosperity, and global influence, why are Americans so worried? he asks. Why did the Senate decline to ratify the test-ban treaty when "nearly every other country in the world" supported it?

Of course, "nearly every other country in the world" has *not* ratified the treaty. Russia has not. China has not. Approximately half the 44 countries listed as having nuclear-power reactors have not. Never mind. Why are Americans so powerful and yet so fearful? It is because, Berger insists, of the new isolationism.

New isolationists, he claims, support a "survivalist" foreign policy, one that is suspicious, stingy, defensive, and, wherever possible, uninvolved, isolated. It is the opposite of an enlightened attitude of engaged leadership. It will, argues Berger, squander U.S. leadership, and alienate our allies and the world.

Isolationists see treaties, he explains—pretty much all treaties—as a threat to U.S. sovereignty and superiority, whereas the Clinton administration sees treaties as a useful tool for mobilizing "the whole world" against threatening behavior. Oh? Have agreements negotiated by this administration mobilized the whole world against, for example, North Korea, with its repeated violations of the agreements and promises it has made? Is that what Berger could mean?

Of course, treaties are not all alike.

During the week before the vote on ratification of the test-ban treaty, Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana, a very serious lawmaker and internationalist, stated his opposition to it, observing, "I do not believe that [the treaty] is of the same caliber as the arms-control treaties that have come before the Senate in recent decades. Its usefulness to the goal of non-proliferation is highly questionable. Its likely ineffectuality will risk undermining support and confidence in the concept of multilateral arms control. Even as a symbolic statement of our desire for a safer world, it is problematic because it would exacerbate risks and uncertainties related to the safety of our nuclear stockpile."

At which point Madeleine Albright joined the chorus of Clinton officials, claiming that rejection of the treaty by the Senate was not binding on the administration. According to the *Wash-*

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ington Times, she notified a number of governments around the world that the U.S. government continued "to support strongly the treaty and the associated international regime." "Despite the delay in U.S. ratification," her letter stated, "let me reaffirm America's commitment to reducing the dangers posed by nuclear weapons." Albright's spokesman, James Rubin, explained, "We believe that so long as the president, in this case President Clinton, expresses his intention to seek advice and consent pending whatever time frame he chooses, customary international law applies." Thus, as the Clinton administration sees it, its preferences trump the Constitution.

And this is one Clinton Doctrine that deserves far more attention than it has so far received. **NR**

■ **FOREIGN POLICY II** ■

His Own Fault

How Clinton has spoiled internationalism

PETER W. RODMAN

AFTER the Senate rejected the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty last month, President Clinton unleashed a torrent of abuse at Republicans: "Isolationist," "reckless," "partisan," "inexcusable," etc. Yet the president's bitterness may have come from a glimmer of recognition that what he was really facing was not an attack by Republican barbarians but the collapse of his own foreign policy. In this field, as in others, his is a failed presidency. If there has been any weakening of American internationalism in the past seven years, it is Clinton's own handiwork.

Take arms control. Clinton seems to have patented a new diplomatic style, one that could be called the "kamikaze arms-control negotiation." Since Wilson and Versailles, presidents have absorbed the lesson that treaties have a better chance of ratification if the Senate is consulted and its views given weight—so that a treaty, once concluded, has a bipartisan provenance. All the successful arms-control agreements in the last 30 years have benefited from this; even the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention was approved largely because the concept had originated in the Reagan administration.

The comprehensive test ban, by contrast, was an idea rejected as a matter of principle by all Republican administrations in the last 30 years, as unverifiable and harmful to the U.S. nuclear deterrent. What could have been in Clinton's mind, therefore, when he plunged ahead without serious Senate consultation, knowing the treaty had little chance of Republican support? Did he want a political issue, with which to hammer the Republicans, more than he wanted the treaty?

This is an important question, because Clinton is now charging down the same road, in negotiations with the Russians on strategic weapons and missile defenses. Required by law to make a decision next year on the deployment of missile defenses, the Clintonites are desperate for "permission" from the Russians, in the form of an amendment to the 1972 ABM Treaty. To entice Moscow, they are offering 1) dangerously low ceilings on strategic offensive weapons, 2) a very restrictive definition of the defenses we might employ, and 3) other sweeteners, such as financing for new ABM radars in Siberia. The Russians haven't yet bitten. But one thing is certain: Such an agreement, if reached, would be defeated in the Senate even more overwhelmingly than the test-ban treaty.

Arms control is, of course, of value—when properly done. Done naively, or, as the Clintonites have done it, in a politicized manner, it cannot win a true domestic consensus. The cause of arms control may survive, in some form, under future presidents, but it has been badly wounded. This is Bill Clinton's own doing.

Then there is the United Nations. This is another issue about which the administration has lately been lambasting the "isolationist" Congress. The fact that the United States is about $1 billion in arrears in paying its share of U.N. peacekeeping costs may be an embarrassment, but the U.N. is hardly the centerpiece of American national-security policy; and if the administration really thinks it is, this is more a reflection of the Clintonites' flawed understanding than of any supposed shortcoming of Congress.

Nor is the payment problem even Congress's fault. What the media have failed to report is that, for the past two years, the Republicans have been offering a compromise on the anti-abortion language that has been a sticking point. To soften legislation barring U.N. funding for agencies that promote abortion in family-planning programs, Republicans have agreed to presidential-waiver authority in one provision, and watered down the rest so that its practical effects would be minimal. Yet Clinton has been unwilling to meet the Republicans even halfway, refusing to deviate one iota from his maximalist pro-abortion position. Apparently he cares more about his feminist constituency than about the United Nations.

An even bigger issue, of course, is the administration's excessive faith in the U.N., its eagerness to subordinate U.S. national interests to it, and the lack of public support for this "multilateralist" philosophy. The administration thinks, reflexively, in "multilateralist" terms. When 15 Americans were killed in a helicopter collision over Iraq in April 1994, Al Gore paid tribute to "those who died in the service of the United Nations." Clinton once referred to the "U.N.'s success" in the Gulf War. There is also the astonishing fact that over one-third of all U.N. Security Council resolutions since 1945 have occurred during the Clinton administration. This is an administration that seems uncomfortable expressing itself in foreign policy except in the vocabulary of multilateralism.

Lately, however, this approach has come a cropper. Russian and Chinese obstruction, and occasional mischief by the French, have blocked effective Security Council action on a range of priority issues, from North Korea to Iraq to Kosovo. For an administration worshipful of the U.N. as the source of legitimacy, this is a profound and anguishing disap-

Mr. Rodman, an NR senior editor, is director of national-security programs at the Nixon Center.

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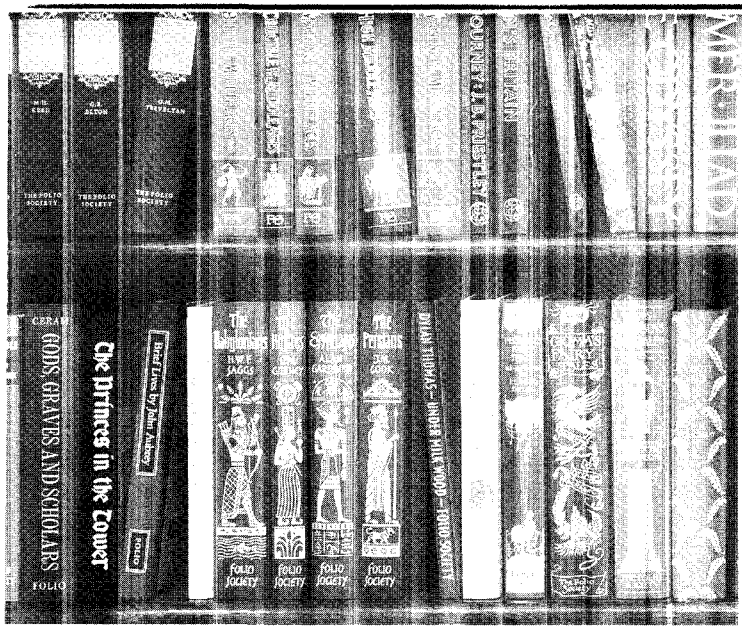

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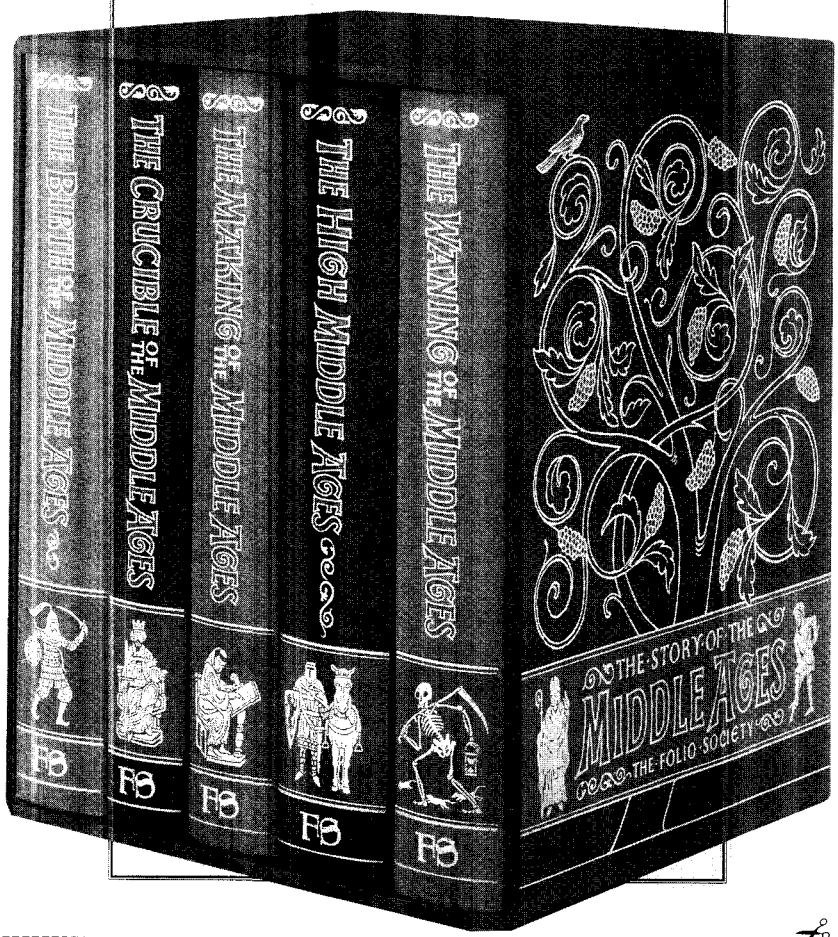
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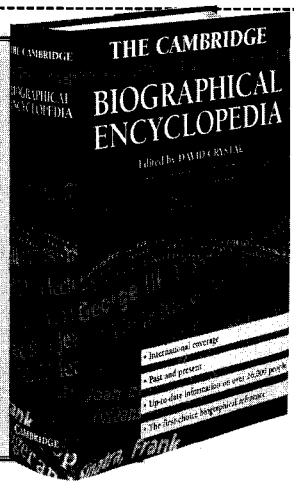

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pointment. For an American public that still clings to old-fashioned notions of American sovereignty and national interest, it only intensifies the disillusionment with the U.N. This too is a Clinton legacy.

Then there is military intervention. There can be no doubt that the United States must be willing and able to use its military power abroad for important national goals; but the contribution of the Clinton administration has been to squander public support for the whole idea.

The administration came into office believing that traditional strategic challenges no longer existed, and that peacekeeping or other humanitarian endeavors, in collaboration with the "international community," would henceforth be the primary mission of the American military. Our use of force would be tainted if a "selfish" national interest were involved.

■

This administration seems uncomfortable expressing itself in foreign policy except in the vocabulary of multilateralism.

■

It soon turned out that the American public had little patience for indiscriminate do-goodism. Peacekeeping in Somalia in 1993 was a costly fiasco. The intervention in Bosnia was a confused mission with an ambiguous outcome (and a seemingly endless commitment). When Haiti was occupied in 1994 to ensure "democracy," the administration could not risk any kind of vote in Congress to support the mission—because little support existed there. The Bosnia and Kosovo missions also lacked congressional resolutions of endorsement. In conducting the war over Kosovo, remember, the president would not risk a single casualty. Could there be a more damning confession of how thin he knew public support to be? The American people will probably be gun-shy about intervention for a long time to come. This too is part of Clinton's legacy.

Finally, consider trade policy. While there are protectionists in both parties, it was the Republicans who carried the NAFTA and WTO votes in Clinton's first term. But fast-track legislation to facilitate an expansion of free-trade agreements will remain, for the immediate future, comatose. Republicans have tired of bearing so much of the political risk. Clinton's inability to deliver his own party on the matter of free trade must be counted another failure. His insistence during his first term on the primacy of domestic economic interests, and his continuing heavy political reliance on AFL-CIO muscle, helped produce this problem—yet another Clinton legacy.

Clinton's successors will have the job of salvaging America's national-security policy and global leadership from this wreckage. Fortunately, it is not American internationalism but Clinton-style internationalism that lies discredited. The Republicans have a real opportunity to offer a more strategic-minded policy, grounded in the national interest rather than today's indiscriminate (and ultimately feckless) humanitarianism. A Republican foreign policy based on a concept of the national interest can reassure Americans that their leaders are able to tell the difference between what is important for us internationally and what is not.

Clinton is known to disparage this kind of strategic analysis as "Old Think." For the last seven years we have heard the rhetoric of "democratic enlargement," of the primacy of economics and domestic concerns, of environmentalism, multilateralism, and humanitarian intervention. The Clintonites' aversion to strategic thinking led to a conscious effort to delegitimize it. When assigning blame for the public's confusion about foreign policy, the president need look no further than his mirror. NR

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■ EUROPE ■

Dilemmas within Dilemmas

A report from the Balkans

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

"GREECE has a problem," said the head of an American non-governmental organization. "It wants to lead the Balkans without being part of the Balkans."

We were chatting at a conference in Athens that had brought together Greek politicians, American and West European observers, and, most important, Serbs opposed to the regime of President Slobodan Milosevic. The topic was, inevitably, how to restore stability to the Balkans.

The American's joke was quite serious. Greece today wants to shed its ramshackle and corrupt Balkan image and enter the world of globalization and free markets—but it is next door to countries that have engaged in four wars over the last decade. So the Greek government and its opposition agree on the same foreign policy: a firm upholding of the international status quo by Europe and the United States. As opposition leader Kostas Karamanlis told the conference: Borders must be inviolable, Kosovo must remain part of Yugoslavia, and Montenegro must be discouraged from seeking independence.

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Standing in the way of stability, however, is a large obstacle: Milosevic. So far, the wars he has waged have lost for Serbia a great deal of territory—up to and including Kosovo. One Serb oppositionist predicted that Milosevic would end up as mayor of Belgrade, fighting a losing war for the suburbs.

But as long as he remains in power, no one can rest easy. The Serb oppositionists argued that the West should assist the remaining free media in

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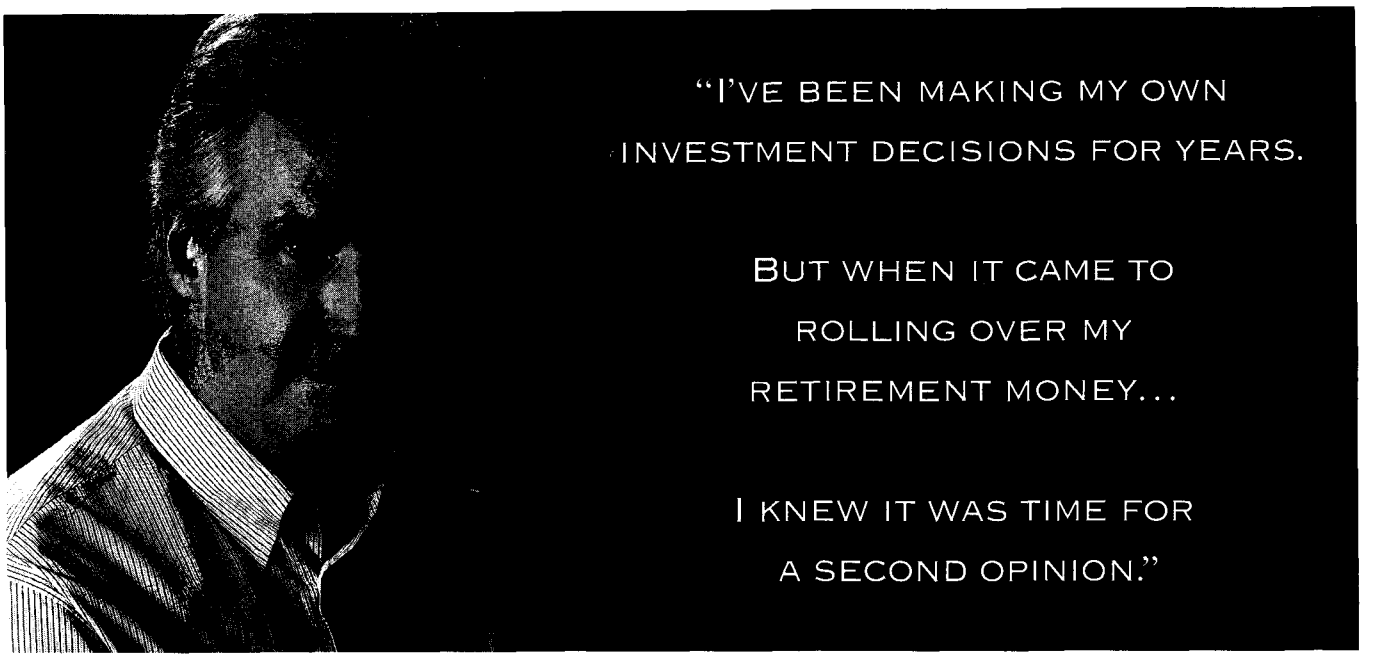
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Yugoslavia (and themselves), and direct humanitarian aid not through bodies controlled by Milosevic but through the 32 major Serbian cities run by opposition mayors.

Greek politicians present were sympathetic, but doubtful that the Serb opposition could beat a ruler as ruthless and crafty as Milosevic—and as desperate. He is now facing a dreadful dilemma: Either remain in power or go to prison for a very long time. Naturally, he is determined to stay in power.

Off the record, some even argued that the indictment against Milosevic should be lifted as part of a deal that would allow him and his family to live quietly in exile. When we countered with the need to punish human-rights violations, they replied, "Well, if you really value human rights, you can always march to Belgrade and depose him."

We stood our ground, of course, but I noticed that our side of the debate all had return tickets to Paris, London, Berlin, and Washington.

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Which is not to accept the Greek argument as a whole. It is understandable that Greece should not want the Balkans to be balkanized further. But stability is not to be achieved by blind support of the status quo against deeply rooted popular sentiments. If the people in Kosovo and Montenegro are determined not to remain in a Yugoslavia ruled by Milosevic, they cannot really be forced to do so. After all, the four Balkan wars since 1989 have all been started by Milosevic attempting to compel four nations to remain in Yugoslavia against their will. And Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia are today all independent—while Kosovo is heading in that direction.

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On to Pristina. If the capital of Kosovo was ever a beautiful city, it must have been just after the Second World War. Though it nestles in a pleasant valley and has some dignified older apartment buildings, its more recent architects have been the "FX" school of neo-modernism and NATO's bomber pilots. Both did their worst.

Along with their usual egg-box apartments, the neo-modernists erected one building that looks like the inside of a piano—a concert hall perhaps?—and another that resembles giant tennis balls packed inside barbed-wire cages. (If it should turn out to be a sports stadium, I will reevaluate it as a witty subversive comment on the plight of the athlete under Marxism.)

Naturally, these were the buildings the bombers managed to miss. What they hit were respectably functional structures such as army barracks and power utilities. In addition, Serbs and Albanians burned out each other's homes, leaving some streets looking like teeth in a decaying mouth. Add in the occasional bomb site with steel wires sticking up from the ground and shattered windows covered with blue plastic, and Kosovo offers a first impression of disorder and ruin.

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But in fact, it's not so terrible. Almost all Kosovar Albanians returned to their homes within a couple of months of the war's end. They are restoring them with astonishing speed. And there is a kind of mini-boom in the "informal sector" of the economy, as the Albanians reopen shops and rebuild everything.

This judgment does need some qualification. The entire Kosovo economy is really an informal (i.e. black) economy, since there is no settled government to tax and regulate businesses. The U.N. civilian mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was set up to provide such a government.

But UNMIK has very little money with which to establish its authority. After the war, the U.S. and the European Union agreed that since the U.S. had done most of the military heavy lifting, the EU would finance the bulk of reconstruction costs. Thus far, however, little EU aid has reached Kosovo.

UNMIK's second problem is that, while its charter, written by diplomats, laid down very firmly that Kosovo remains a province of Yugoslavia, the overwhelming majority of Kosovars will accept nothing less than full independence. UNMIK, meanwhile, has to make practical decisions: Does UNMIK have the right to privatize an industry without the consent of Milosevic, an indicted war criminal? Must Kosovo's telephone calls go through Belgrade, or do they get a new national code? In almost all of these cases, common sense points one way, and UNMIK's charter the other.

Finally, UNMIK has competitors for its role as Kosovo's new government—one political party drawn from the Kosovo Liberation Front, and another from Ibrahim Rugova's "shadow government." Both are gearing up for political battles, and seeking UNMIK's support.

Until the EU's promised reconstruction funds arrive, however, Kosovo can expect very little government from anyone—apart from the military protection provided by the NATO-dominated KFOR troops.

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But if you were to judge by the language of the Kosovar politicians who spoke to our delegation, you would suppose we were visiting Sweden or Switzerland. "I want to see a political system based on pluralism," said one. "No, it must be a pluralist *democratic* system," replied a second. "Not enough," said the third. "It must be a pluralist, democratic, *multi-ethnic* system." That final declaration scoops the pool, since the "principle of multi-ethnicity" is something to which UNMIK and other international aid groups have committed themselves very strongly.

After a while, though, one couldn't help noticing that these platitudes were uttered by men surrounded by bodyguards; further, that some of the speakers could themselves get employment as bodyguards. Also, my advance briefing had suggested that I refrain from speaking Serbian in Pristina—no problem, fortunately, but sound advice. A Bulgarian aid worker was recently shot in the street for answering a question about the time in Serbo-Croat.

The remaining Serbs in Kosovo—about 90,000, or just under 10 percent of the population—have accordingly congregated for safety in about ten enclaves. Those in cities live in fear. It will be some time before Serbs can lie down with Albanians in safety. (And vice versa, naturally.)

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In a Serbian Orthodox monastery—a remote rural citadel guarded by KFOR soldiers—Father Sava, a practiced media cleric, argued that power should be decentralized to small Swiss-style cantons so that people living in the Serb

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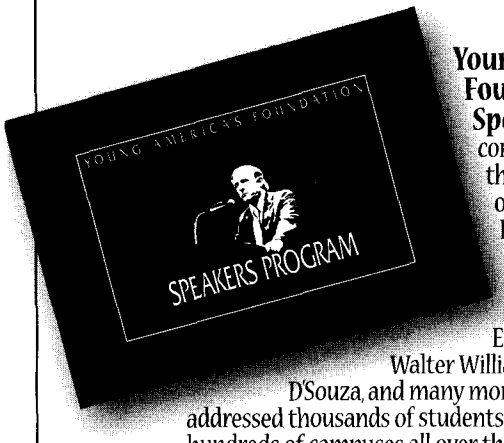

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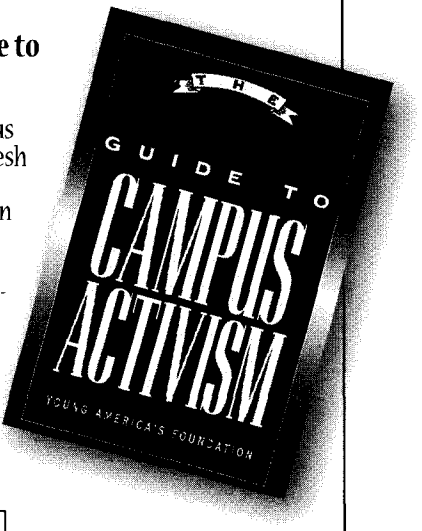

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enclaves could receive basic governmental services without discrimination. In theory, there is much to be said for cantonization. Switzerland is the world's most successful multi-ethnic country, and has managed to combine several languages with a strong sense of national identity by decentralizing power down to the lowest possible level. Maybe that solution will be adopted in the distant future, long after present hatreds have cooled.

In the current state of Kosovo, however, cantons are a non-starter. Both UNMIK and the Albanians see them as an attempt to reestablish Milosevic's power and create conditions for the eventual partition of Kosovo. Also, there are stories of "men in black jackets" (i.e., Serb paramilitaries in light disguise) turning up in some of the enclaves to stiffen Serb resistance to both UNMIK and Kosovo's independence.

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Milosevic's strategy can only put the Kosovar Serbs at greater risk. They are simply too few in number to bargain effectively for multi-ethnic power-sharing on the Northern Ireland or any other model. The present reality of Kosovo, as Veton Surroi points out, is that it is an ethnic nation-state heading for an independence that became more or less inevitable when the Yugoslav Army moved out.

Surroi, a well-respected independent editor, is a moderate who might be expected to endorse the "principle of multi-ethnicity." But he is also a realist. What is needed, he says, is not multi-ethnicity but tolerance.

Building tolerance, however, will take not only time but also the restoration of people's security. In other words, it will require the presence of KFOR for a long time to come. All of the people, Serb and Albanian, and most of the politicians want it to stay indefinitely. And what is the view of the Pentagon and the U.S. administration?

"Take a look at the military camp the U.S. is building down the road," said a senior KFOR officer. "It's the only thing in Kosovo you can see from the satellite. You may be here for the long haul."

Or even longer—if the international community insists on building multi-ethnicity too. **NR**

■ THE HILL ■

Madame Ambassador? Yech!

The case of Carol Moseley-Braun

KATE O'BEIRNE

A FORMER senator who left office under an ethical cloud is nominated for an ambassadorship. Some Republican senators question her nomination—and are promptly charged with racism.

A nominee for the federal bench is soft on crime. Republicans oppose *his* nomination—and they, too, are tarred as racists.

Democrats are playing the race card with unusual vigor these days, and it's easy to see why: They're desperate. "Neither Gore nor Bradley is cutting it with blacks and Hispanics—two groups absolutely essential for Democrats to win the presidential election," pollster John Zogby told the *Washington Times*, following a recent poll of 1,000 likely voters. The poll also indicated that the Republican frontrunner has an unusual level of support from minorities. Among blacks, Vice President Gore leads Gov. George W. Bush 59 percent to 31 percent. That 31 percent is alarmingly high, and is scaring Democrats into a fury of race-baiting.

The strategy is clear: Solidify the Democratic base by smearing Republicans as racist bogeymen. Months before the GOP convention, Democrats have selected a running mate for Bush: Sen. Jesse Helms. The Democrats had only limited success when they tried to put Helms's face on the defeat of the nuclear-test-ban treaty. But with their next attempt, they hit the jackpot: Helms walked into a well-prepared White House trap.

When the president nominated the highly objectionable Carol Moseley-Braun to be ambassador to New Zealand, Helms, predictably, objected. But instead of sticking to the allegations of illegality that have trailed Moseley-Braun like an oil slick since her 1992 Senate campaign, Helms demanded that she apologize for the fight she waged in 1993 against the United Daughters of the Confederacy over a patent involving the use of the Confederate flag.

The White House trap clanged shut. The Clintonites had the delicious spectacle of Jesse Helms arguing with a black woman (over the Confederate flag, no less!). Al Gore was clearly delighted, quickly declaring that he was "deeply angered and disappointed." He called on Bush and the other Republican candidates to join him "in rejecting Senator Helms's disgraceful tactic," in order to put an end to "divisiveness."

Helms dropped the demand he had made on behalf of "a wonderful group of little old ladies," but was still faced with the problem of the suitability of an ambassadorial nominee under serious suspicion of criminal behavior. Helms has noted an "ethical cloud" over Moseley-Braun, but a quick review of the unresolved allegations reveals far more serious problems than those gentle words suggest.

In 1995, the Justice Department twice turned down requests by the IRS criminal tax division seeking subpoena authority to pursue its investigation of Moseley-Braun. In its first request, the IRS told the Justice Department that it had evidence of bank fraud, bribery, and other crimes dating back to Moseley-Braun's stint as Cook County's recorder of deeds. In its second request, the IRS reported that Moseley-Braun and her 1992 Senate campaign manager (and ex-fiancé) may have used more than $280,000 in political donations for personal expenses. The IRS found evidence that the pair had spent $70,000 on designer clothes, $64,000 on travel to Hawaii, Europe, and Africa, $18,000 on jewelry, $12,000 on stereo equipment, and $25,000 for two Jeeps.

When the IRS investigation became public during Moseley-Braun's reelection race in 1998, the tax agency quickly announced that the senator was no longer under investigation. Moseley-

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Braun credited the Justice Department with clearing her of wrongdoing.

Had the investigation been quashed by illicit political pressure? According to numerous former Justice Department and IRS officials, IRS requests for subpoena authority to pursue additional evidence are routinely granted. Why were the requests refused in this case? The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has requested documents from the Justice Department relating to this issue. The administration's response (surprise!) was to stonewall.

And that's not all. During her 1992 campaign, evidence surfaced that Moseley-Braun had committed Medicaid fraud. Three years earlier, she and her siblings had split a $28,750 inheritance owed to her mother, who, as a Medicaid patient in a nursing home, should have used the money to pay for her care. Moseley-Braun attributed the incident to a misunderstanding, and later paid $15,239 to reimburse the state. Illinois's Democratic attorney general declined to pursue the case, and although Republican governor Jim Edgar declared that "someone broke the law," he couldn't bring himself to say who exactly that might be. Perhaps he didn't have to. Despite her easy win against a weak Republican candidate in 1992, 56 percent of the voters doubted her honesty.

Moseley-Braun has escaped serious inquiry by boldly intimidating anyone who dares ask uncomfortable questions. She frequently complains about being held to a double standard owing to her race and sex. At one point during her reelection campaign, she flatly declared she wouldn't answer any questions about her use of campaign funds, or the activities of her former fiancé.

When George Will wrote a column in 1998 that detailed the charges she had faced, she likened him to a Ku Klux Klansman, who "can just take his hood and go back to wherever he came from." If George Will elicited such a response (George Will!), what hope is there for Jesse Helms's attempt to get some long-overdue answers?

Some Republican senators have concluded that the price of defeating the Moseley-Braun nomination would be too steep: a media circus portraying the wronging of a black woman by Jesse Helms. This explains why Moseley-Braun will likely be carrying her uninspected ethical baggage to New Zealand, after a bon voyage vote from the Senate.

A GOP leadership aide explains that senators were already defensive over the false charges of racism following the rejection of Judge Ronnie White for the federal bench. If Moseley-Braun is not confirmed, says the aide, "there is no doubt that all of the handwringers will vote to confirm the next liberal black nominee who goes to the floor." And that could be a pending nominee for a lifetime judicial appointment.

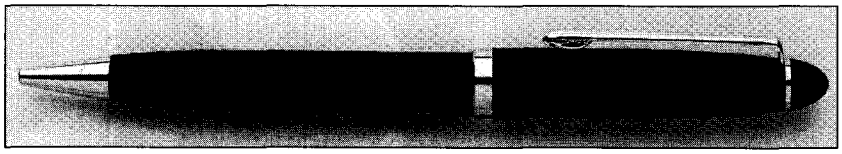
The president has nominated Judge James Wynn of North Carolina to a southern appeals bench that currently enjoys a narrow conservative majority. In the opinion of one conservative legal analyst, this appeals court is the only one that routinely "articulates the right outcomes for the right reasons." The court has recently upheld both a ban on partial-birth abortion and a challenge to the *Miranda* decision.

Judge Wynn was defeated last November in his bid to stay on North Carolina's supreme court. The chief judge of the circuit maintains that there is no need to fill the vacancies on his court—and some Republican senators question whether Judge Wynn ought to enjoy a lifetime perch after North Carolina voters rejected him even for a limited-term appointment to their highest court.

It appears that Sen. Helms will have plenty of company in opposing the Wynn nomination. But when it comes to the campaign to nominate Helms for the 2000 GOP ticket, the White House isn't taking anything for granted: They recently opened another front. Ten congresswomen disrupted a hearing of the Foreign Relations Committee to demand Helms's immediate attention to an international treaty on the elimination of discrimination against women. At Helms's request, the placard-waving women were escorted out of the hearing. Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey insisted that the disruption of the hearing was justified, because "the women of the world cannot wait another day for him to take action on [the treaty]."

By the way, the urgent matter that warranted this manufactured confrontation has been pending before the Senate since 1980. **NR**

THE RIGHT WRITER



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■ THE HILL II ■

Jousting with Bill

Has the GOP finally got smart?

JOHN J. MILLER

"IMAGINE a world where there's no punishment for a crime, where thieves can steal from unsuspecting victims without a worry of being caught," says a concerned voice as menacing visions of street villainy flit across the television screen. "Well, it's about to happen in Washington." Some in Congress are getting ready to "raid Social Security," warns the narrator. "Protect your family's future. Insist that every penny of the Social Security trust fund go to the people who paid into it."

The words are familiar, but the sponsors have changed. This fall, it's the Republicans who are rushing to the rhetorical defense of Social Security. In a series of ads now playing in eight key congressional districts, the GOP is accusing Democrats of the same offense that Democrats have tried for so long to pin on Republicans. And it's driving the Democrats mad. "It is the most cynical thing I've ever seen in my time in politics," complained minority leader Dick Gephardt on September 29. By the end of October, the GOP had poured about half a million dollars into the effort—not a bad investment, considering that it could save billions.

Autumn is usually a season of discontent for conservatives on Capitol Hill. It's the time of year when a federal budget must come together, forcing Republicans to reach bad deals with the White House, and providing an annual reminder that government continues to grow. Last year, for example, discretionary spending exploded by about $20 billion during last-minute budget negotiations with President Clinton.

But now, for the first time since taking over Congress, Republicans have actually put Clinton on the defensive during budget talks. The president has signed appropriations bills he didn't want to sign, and abandoned major parts of his domestic program; in short, he's been denied the blank check he had come to expect every October.

There are plenty of problems with the Republicans' Y2K budget, including unnecessary new spending, no significant tax cuts, and a few accounting tricks. Yet heading into the final phase of budget dealmaking, Republicans are in a stronger position than ever before. Simply fighting Clinton to a draw is a major achievement. "Compared with the ideal conservative budget, this one isn't great," says Peter Sperry of the Heritage Foundation. "But compared to the expectations set up over the last several years, it's pretty good."

Promising not to raid Social Security has been the linchpin of a year-long strategy developed by House Republicans. The idea came to House leaders following Clinton's State of the Union address in January. The president proposed spending 40 percent of the budget surplus generated by Social Security on a variety of pet projects and saving the other 60 percent to pay down the federal debt. Speaker Denny Hastert asked GOP whip Tom DeLay, his close ally, to prepare a budget plan that would sidestep another embarrassing October deal. "We needed an approach that would both control spending and keep our four-vote majority together," says Hastert.

Tom DeLay by Roman Genn

Just as Clinton believed his commitment to preserve most of the Social Security surplus would head off GOP tax cuts, DeLay figured a Republican promise not to spend any of it would deny the White House many of its spending priorities. DeLay met individually with almost every Republican in the House to discuss the budget. One of the major challenges he faced was to persuade conservatives to support bills that would increase federal spending. There are about a hundred GOP members who routinely won't vote for any appropriations bills at all—"the puritanical caucus," as one leadership aide describes them. As a result, Republican budgeteers have had to compromise with Democrats at the start of every appropriations cycle. Last year, for instance, the budget passed with more Democratic votes than Republican ones. And because these funding bills are bipartisan from the start, they cost more than solid-front Republican versions would. DeLay had to convince conservatives that, for example, voting to freeze foreign aid at $12 billion is better than voting against it, only to have a negotiated budget wind up spending $16 billion.

DeLay's tactic paid off. By October 28, Republicans had passed all 13 appropriations bills, chiefly with Republican votes. The defense bill is a case in point: It passed the House with 372 votes. Clinton would have preferred to hold defense spending hostage for, say, gun control. But he faced a yes-or-no choice on a bill that clearly had enough strength to override a veto. At one point, Gephardt seemed to stake his leadership on being able to sustain a Clinton veto—"If you don't like it, I don't have to be leader," he said to House Democrats, according to a report in *Roll Call*—but his colleagues apparently weren't convinced, and Clinton reluctantly signed the defense bill. As a result, about half of this year's discretionary spending is no longer up for presidential grabs.

The Hastert-DeLay ads on Social Security stiffened GOP resolve.

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Republicans knew they faced a ceiling of $592 billion for discretionary spending. The appropriations bills they passed actually topped that mark, meaning that, without further cuts, Republicans would have to dip into the Social Security funds they have proclaimed sacred. John Kasich, as budget chairman, suggested that Congress use a device employed by state legislatures when their ledgers don't balance: an across-the-board cut in discretionary programs. The cut amounted to just under 1 percent—"sanding off the edges," as Rep. Heather Wilson put it.

Clinton called this a "terrible" way to make a budget. His press secretary Joe Lockhart said that the retroactive reduction would prove "devastating" to military readiness. But the poverty of their position was obvious: Clinton had requested a $263.5 billion defense budget. Congress ratcheted it up to $268 billion. Minus the 1 percent cut, the "devastating" congressional budget still comes out $2 billion ahead of the original Clinton request.

This may seem like minor haggling in the context of a nearly $2 trillion budget. But consider all the things Clinton probably *won't* be getting this fall: HMO patients' rights, a minimum-wage increase, and hate-crime laws. The budget remains far from perfect. There's plenty of pork, such as $100,000 to develop "pungency testing procedures" for vidalia onions—a concession to Democratic representative Sanford Bishop of Georgia to win his vote on the agriculture bill. But that's a small price to pay when the alternative is a closed-door session with the president that would be likely to end with the GOP "melting" (as Newt Gingrich once put it) and conceding a costly new entitlement, such as Medicare funding of prescription drugs.

To be sure, there are problems with the GOP's sudden love affair with Social Security. For a variety of reasons, it may not work next year. In addition, paying down the debt rankles supply-side sensibilities. And all this GOP talk about saving Social Security's phony trust fund may damage the fight to transform the New Deal retirement program for a population of stock-owners. On this final point, at least, Hastert isn't worried: "We've always thought that would take a Republican president." NR

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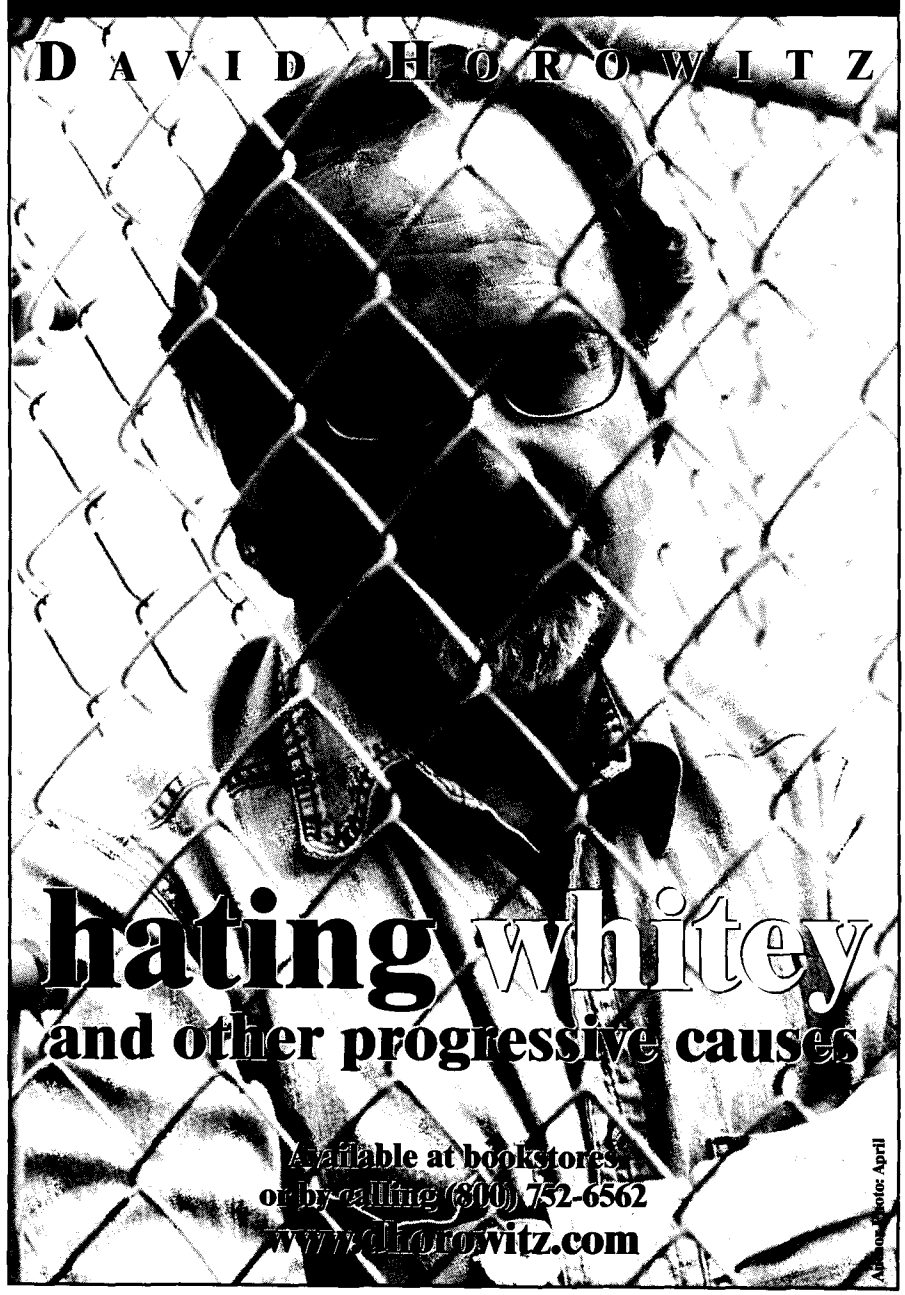

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■ CAMPAIGN 2000 ■

Soldier Gore

The story of the veep and Vietnam

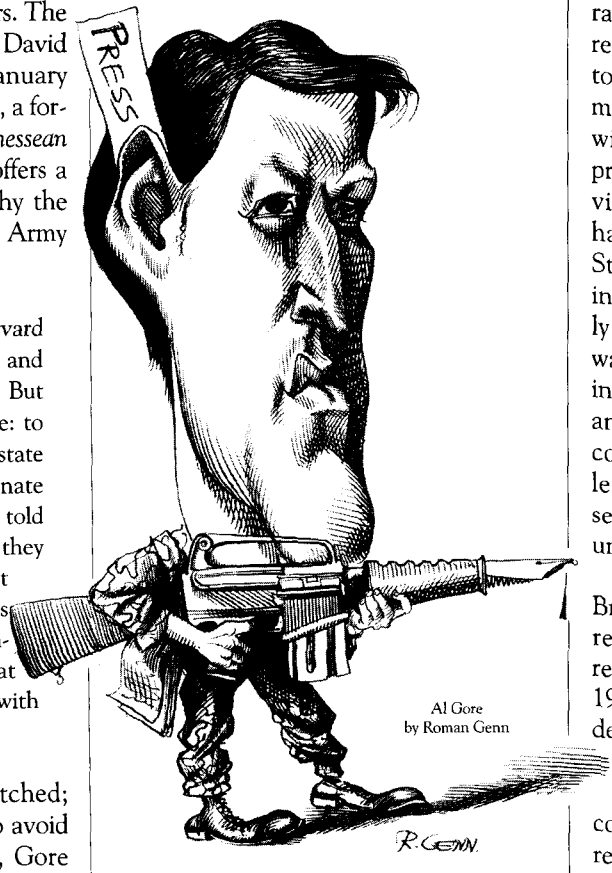
BOB ZELNICK

EARLY during the research for my biography of Al Gore Jr., I came across an article on the 1970 campaign in which his father, Albert Gore Sr., lost the U.S. Senate seat he had held for 18 years. The piece, "The End of a Populist" by David Halberstam, appeared in the January 1971 issue of *Harper's*. Halberstam, a former reporter for the Nashville *Tennessean* who knew the Gore family well, offers a good contemporary account of why the younger Gore decided to join the Army despite deep personal misgivings:

> Young Albert graduated from Harvard this year: he is militantly anti-war and did not want to go into the Army. But he was faced with a terrible choice: to stay out and avoid the draft in a state like Tennessee would cost the Senate one of its leading doves. His family told him to make his own choice, that they could not care less whether Albert ran and won. In fact Pauline [Gore's mother], who is bitterly and militantly anti-war, told young Al that she would be glad to go to Canada with him.

Canada was, of course, far-fetched; there were plenty of other ways to avoid military service. But in the end, Gore decided to join the Army in an unsuccessful effort to save his father's seat. Neither in the Halberstam piece, nor in my own conversations with people who were close to Al Jr. at the time, did a second rationale enter the picture—the altruistic notion that if he avoided or evaded the draft some other young Tennessean from his home county would be forced to go in his place. As John Tyson, a Harvard roommate, later said: "He felt by helping his dad and campaigning with his dad that that was the greatest thing that he as an individual could do to stop the war." Tyson was in a position to know. He lived near Newark, New Jersey—the site of the recruitment center where Gore enlisted—and was perhaps the last friend to see him before he raised his hand and joined the military.

Even so, I decided to give Gore the benefit of the doubt when, years later, he told interviewers that the desire to spare another Tennessee family the anguish of having a son serve in his place had also played a role in his decision. After all, I reasoned, the fundamental fact was that



Al Gore
by Roman Genn

Gore did volunteer. He did go to Vietnam, and traveled around that country as a uniformed military journalist covering the activities of his 20th Engineering brigade. He was no grunt, to be sure; but few volunteers were. The "teeth to tail" ratio in Vietnam at the time was roughly 1 to 4, and during most of the war the Army simply assigned its draftees to combat while "taking care of its own" with behind-the-lines jobs.

Still, Vietnam was no picnic, even for journalists. Gore traveled around the country in military planes and choppers that flew low to avoid enemy missiles, in the process making the occupants more vulnerable to small-arms fire. (On one of my early trips as a freelance reporter, I traveled aboard an old Huey from coastal Nha Trang to Ban Me Thout in the central highlands. I was surprised to see several of my journalist colleagues lug hardback three-ring binders aboard the chopper and proceed to sit on them. When I asked what was going on, a trim redheaded Reuters correspondent replied matter-of-factly, "The bullet doesn't go as far up your ass if it has to pass through a thick notebook.")

Why did Gore go? Over time, he has sought to emphasize the civic motive rather than the antiwar motive. In a recent conversation with compliant historian Douglas Brinkley, who was permitted to spend several days traveling with Gore aboard Air Force Two in preparation of a *Talk* magazine piece, the vice president suggested, "I wouldn't have been able to walk down Main Street with my head high, without feeling small and guilty," since "it is perfectly obvious that if you found some fancy way to get out of it somebody would go in your place." Like this reporter, historian Brinkley appears to have found no contemporaneous Gore statement or letter corroborating this later-recalled sentiment. It may be true, even if unprovable.

More difficult to understand is how Brinkley left unchallenged a small but revealing bit of revisionism by Gore regarding his combat record. In March 1988, during his first run for the presidency, Gore described for a *Vanity Fair* article his travel to various firebases where members of his engineering company were at work: "I took my turn regularly on the perimeter in these little firebases out in the boonies. Something would move, we'd fire first and ask questions later."

In a similar vein, Gore told Michael Kelly (then with the *Baltimore Sun*): "I pulled my turn on the perimeter at night and walked through the elephant grass and I was fired upon."

Something in these accounts struck me as fishy. Military units usually have their own duty rosters, including guard

Mr. Zelnick, a visiting professor of journalism at Boston University, is the author of *Gore: A Political Life*.

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duty, and rarely assign those tasks to visitors. Sure enough, my instincts were vindicated when I found Michael O'Hara, a sportswriter for the *Detroit News* who had worked and traveled with Gore in Vietnam and was his closest Army buddy. "We never pulled guard duty in the field because we weren't part of those units," O'Hara told me. "The only place we stood guard was back at Bien Hoa," the secure base where Gore lived. "It was the equivalent of being a school crossing guard," O'Hara recalled. "I know guys that didn't even take their rifles with them."

And what is Gore's current version, compliments of the Brinkley article? Brinkley writes that Gore, like other journalists at Bien Hoa, "had to guard the camp from attack with M-16 automatic rifles strapped to their backs."

"We'd take turns on the perimeter every night," Gore told him, clearly

■

'It was the equivalent of being a school crossing guard,' recalled Gore's closest friend in Vietnam.

■

referring to Bien Hoa rather than those little firebases he recalled so vividly for *Vanity Fair*, or those elephant-grass firefights he described to Kelly.

There's a conflict between the old and the new versions, as there is on a much broader issue as well. Gore was a dove throughout the Vietnam War, as was I. Twenty years later, he supported President Bush's decision to go to war against Iraq, as did I. My conversion began with reports of the murder of unspeakable numbers of Cambodians by their own vile Communist regime, and a lot of Soviet mischief beginning in the late 1970s. Gore tells Brinkley his own conversion began in Vietnam. I'm not sure I believe him.

Gore says his metamorphosis began when Catholic Vietnamese he met expressed fear of losing their religious freedom under Communism. "I was still against the war," he says, "but I sure found out it was a hell of a lot more complicated than I had supposed." But once again, Brinkley delivers no contemporaneous

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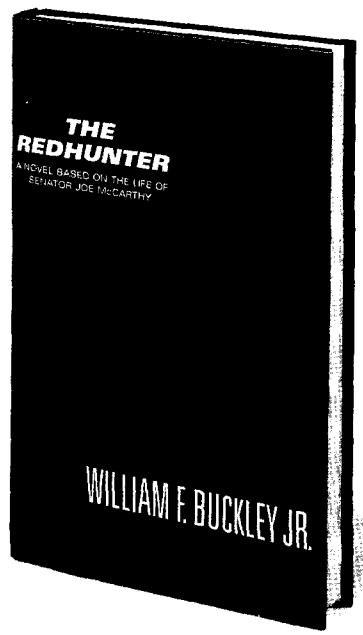

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evidence to sustain Gore's afterthought, a politically convenient one, likely to play well with many Vietnam veterans.

To the contrary, Brinkley cites—as I did in my own biography of Gore—evidence of an embittered, despondent young man utterly disillusioned by his country. One friend of the period describes himself and Gore as "two conscientious objectors in uniform." According to Brinkley, "He turned to philosophical musing and smoking pot, to loving his family—and distrusting his government."

"After Vietnam I swore that I would never, in any way, go into politics," Gore told Brinkley. Instead, he enrolled in the Divinity School at Vanderbilt University. He told a friend he wanted to "atone" for his sins. It would be years before he would recall contemplating the subtleties and nuances that were totally inconsistent with his overt conduct and the recollections of those close to him at the time. Brinkley seems blithely unaware of the contradiction.

I continue to believe that Al Gore Jr. acted with honor and conviction in volunteering for service in a war he despised, and in an Army he had described in a letter to his father as a "fascist, totalitarian" institution. To try to save the seat of his father—a political warrior in the cause of peace—is, in my view, an act of sacrifice and high patriotism, not hypocrisy. It is also a step that few born to privilege would take, regardless of their convictions. And from all accounts, Gore made a good soldier. He was well liked by peers and officers, and respected by both. My research produced no corroboration for rumors circulated by Gore's political enemies that he used the pull of his family or powerful friends to win assignment as an Army journalist.

Still, I am troubled by Gore's tendency to exaggerate the incidents that form his life as one might airbrush the creases and shadows of an already decent photographic portrait. I do not regard his boasts of inventing the Internet, or serving as the model for the protagonist in *Love Story*, or guarding the perimeter of a firebase in the boonies, as reflecting a deep character flaw. I see them merely as the expressions either of a man who is not quite comfortable being who or what he is, or one who is not altogether certain that we are. And that is bad enough. **NR**

■ CULTURE WATCH ■

A Terrible Idea

The memorial to the Japanese-Americans

STEPHEN E. AMBROSE

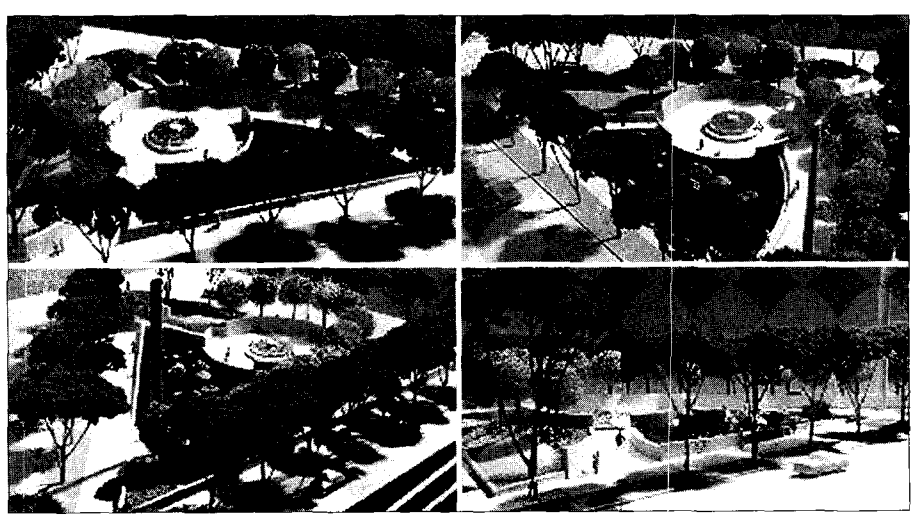
In World War II, 120,000 Japanese-Americans were ordered out of their homes and farms by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Most of them were citizens. None of them were accused of any crime. There was no due process. California governor Earl Warren led other West Coast governors in demanding their removal. They were sent to camps in the desert, surrounded by barbed wire. The camps were called then, and later, concentration camps, which in World War II had a specific meaning, referring to the German extermination camps.

The United States has acknowledged its injustice and repented and given cash compensation to the victims. At the national museum, the Smithsonian in Washington, more than one-quarter of the permanent exhibit on the Second World War is devoted to the treatment of Japanese-Americans. Now a $10 million monument is being erected in Washington to the victims.

There are some distinctions to be made when recounting the dreary and shameful story of the internees. First of all, the Japanese-Americans were not put into concentration camps as the term was understood during the war. None of them were killed by deliberate act of the government. No one proposed, much less acted on, the idea of ridding the United States of Japanese-Americans. Despite the mistreatment, many young Japanese-American men volunteered for the U.S. Army and went into the 442 Regimental Combat Team, which fought in Italy and became one of the most decorated front-line units of the war. (Regrettably, the Armed Services failed to fully use their skills as language interpreters in the Pacific.)

But the main point is, memorials are supposed to be put in place to honor men and women who acted in some positive way for the good of the nation. They are not erected to praise or acknowledge those who were abused. We build monuments to honor those who have put their lives on the line for us, or who have led us through terrible times or onto new paths. The first monument in Washington is to George Washington, who did all three. The second is to Abraham Lincoln, who also did all three. The third is to Thomas Jefferson. Then comes Franklin Roosevelt, Ulysses S. Grant, and other heroes, especially of the Civil War. Then there is the Vietnam Wall and the statue to the men who served their country in Vietnam. A memorial will soon be built to honor the men and women of World War II.

Many of those who should have memo-



Plans for the Japanese-American Memorial in Washington, D.C.

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rials cast in stone in Washington to help all future generations of Americans to remember and honor their deeds, don't. Dwight Eisenhower is one, Harry Truman another, Elizabeth Cady Stanton a third.

The question to be asked is, If we are to erect a memorial in stone to the Japanese-American victims, why not to others? A memorial in the nation's capital to those who were abused, degraded, and discriminated against by the U.S. government should certainly include the Japanese-Americans of 1941–45, but also African-Americans, Chinese-Americans, Spanish-speaking Americans, Native Americans, and many others. We ought to redress the wrongs with apologies, congressional resolutions, exhibits in museums, passages in history textbooks—but not with monuments.

With regard to the Japanese-Americans, it is true that they were discriminated against by the government for no reason other than their race. But, again, they were not alone. African-Americans were discriminated against by national, state, and local governments during the war. They could not vote in most of the states where they lived. Black men were drafted but not allowed to serve in the Armed Forces except in segregated units, which were not allowed equality with their white counterparts.

Chinese-Americans were discriminated against by the national and state governments for decades. They paid taxes but could not vote. They were not allowed to work in various places. Irish-Americans were greeted by signs at taverns, restaurants, and hotels, enforced by police, that read "No dogs or Irishmen allowed." German-Americans were discriminated against all across the country in World War I, by private citizens and by government agencies. The list could go on and on.

No one has proposed erecting in stone a national monument in Washington to honor these victims, or to express America's regrets, or to gain forgiveness. No one should. The memorial to the Japanese-Americans—for which ground was broken on October 22 and which will take about a year to complete—is a terrible idea. **NR**

Mr. Ambrose is the author most recently of *Comrades: Brothers, Fathers, Heroes, Sons, Pals.*

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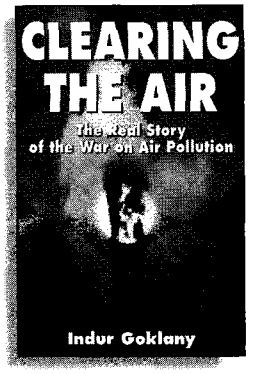

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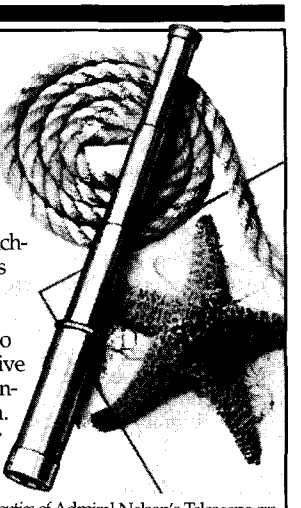

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■ COVER ESSAY ■

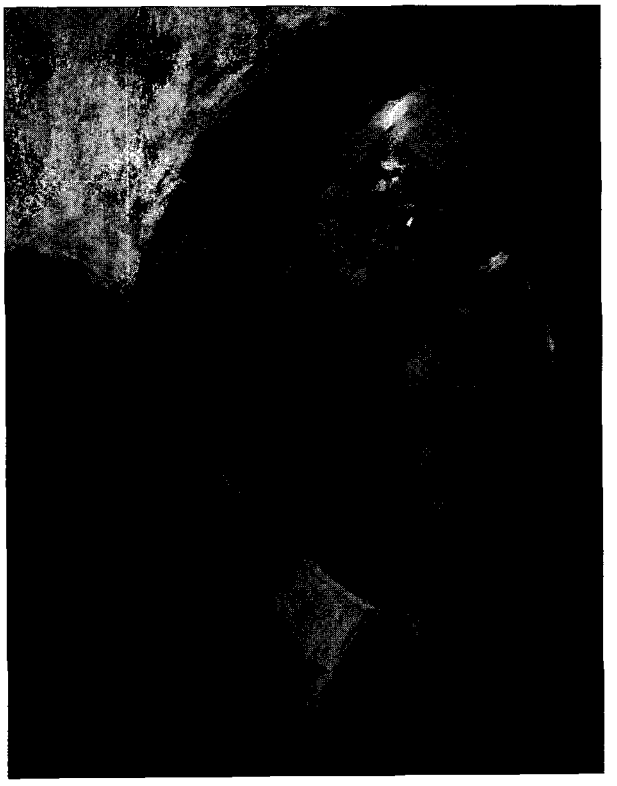
Weird Al

A troubled and alarming vice president

RICHARD BROOKHISER

THERE'S a new, looser Al Gore. He left his assigned stool during his first debate with Bill Bradley at Dartmouth, to walk the stage, like Bill Clinton, and he invited questions from the audience before the show began. On the stump, he gestures broadly, spreading out his arms instead of holding them pinioned at his sides, elbows in, and jerking them up and down like pistons. When he smooches small children, he actually picks them up. (When a kid in New Hampshire started squalling at this close encounter, he murmured reassuringly, "I'm not too scary.")

But there has always been a new, looser Al Gore. His aides, and aides-in-waiting like Martin Peretz, have been assuring us, against the evidence of our senses, that he is a regular guy and a barrel of laughs since he first began running for president, in the 1988 election cycle. The new Al Gore is not only old, but an old fraud. The spontaneity he trots out to show his looseness is learned; you can almost read the messages streaming across the internal prompter: LEAVE THE STOOL . . . SPREAD THE ARMS . . . HOLD THE CHILD.



If Al Gore now is the Al Gore we have always known, we should ask what his enduring characteristics are, and what they might mean. Specifically, why is he so weird.

Consider a few obvious traits.

Gore is intelligent. Not as intelligent as James Madison or John C. Calhoun, maybe. But he went to Harvard and worked while he was there (unlike George W. Bush at Yale). He is generally believed to have written the book he signed, his 1992 ecological manifesto, *Earth in the Balance*, a feat that places him in lonely eminence among modern politicians, along with Pat Buchanan.

He is stiff as a railroad tie. Recently there have been a number of politicians with odd body language—Gerald Ford, George Bush—but Gore is uniquely dense and inert. His debate with Dan Quayle in 1992 was a typical performance. When making debater's points he swung his upper body heavily towards Quayle, like a de-mothballed gun turret. His face, whether speaking or listening, had the glazed look of a gaffed fish. When he tries to be more animated, the effect is painful, reminiscent of the Monster in *Young Frankenstein* singing "Puttin' on the Ritz."

Gore's physical rigidity is periodically enlivened by rhetorical frenzies. Louis Menand wrote in a *New Yorker* profile that Gore has, as a public speaker, "only two dials on the console: speed and volume. To convey gravity, he slows down; to convey urgency, he gets louder." He can bellow like Jesse Jackson or Louis Farrakhan, but unlike them, there is no crescendo: The triple forte simply pops out of nowhere. Just as the only forensic trick he knows is raising his voice, the only literary trick he knows is raising the temperature. In *Earth in the Balance*, he invoked Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, *Kristallnacht*, and Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil" to describe modern man's mistreatment of the environment. "Ironically," wrote Gore, "Ethiopia, the first victim of modern totalitarian expansion, has also been an early victim of . . . our assault on the natural world." The famine victims of the mid Eighties "are, in a real sense, victims of our dysfunctional civilization's expansionist tendencies." Gore is as preoccupied with Nazism as Pat Buchanan: Buchanan defends those he believes were wrongly accused of war crimes; Gore accuses consumers and polluters of committing the moral equivalent of war crimes.

The Nineties have been a decade of shameless self-exposure in every arena, from daytime TV to the White House. But Gore was one of the leaders in exploiting private

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sorrows for political gain; if we don't remember, it's only because Bill Clinton does it so much more effectively. Gore made a ghoulish riff out of his son's near-fatal car accident at the 1992 Democratic convention in New York (the son was sitting in the audience, so the cameras could cut back and forth from Gore to his subject). Four years later at the Chicago convention Gore exhumed a sister who had died of lung cancer to decorate a sermon on the lethal effects of smoking. What is noteworthy about Gore's family snapshots is that they involve death; when Bill Clinton enraptured journalists with tales of standing up to his drunkard stepfather, the stepfather, in the time frame of his telling, was alive and kicking.

Are these random traits, drawn from the duffel bag we call the self, or do they hang together?

Gore has identified the episode of his son's accident as the turning point of his life. Though he exploited it in 1992, it moved him powerfully (whether that makes his exploitation better or worse is another question). The acci-

What Gore's words tell us is that he is depressed. He is depressed because he feels dead. That is what depression is.

dent, he wrote in *Earth in the Balance*, made him "impatient with the status quo, with conventional wisdom, with the lazy assumption that we can always muddle through." It caused him to rethink not just environmental policy, but the spiritual and intellectual foundations of the modern world. (Gore blames Descartes and Francis Bacon for a mind–body split in Western man that leads to alienation from both emotion and nature—see Adam Wolfson's "Apocalypse Gore" in the March 8 issue of this magazine.) Gore began writing *Earth in the Balance* in the hospital where his son was recovering, and he describes the accident in the introduction. The act of putting the story down on paper, he haltingly told Michael Kelly, then with the *New York Times*, was "one of the most intense and painful and moving experiences I ever had": "I could not control the emotion. It was, it was. I mean, you know. I mean, I was just sobbing as I was putting it, as the words were finally falling out of me."

Any parent would be moved by such a brush with death. But each parent would be moved in his own way. Winston Churchill would react differently from Kurt Cobain. How did it strike Al Gore?

This is the *Earth in the Balance* version. The crash happened in April 1989 when, as Gore tells us, he had lost his first presidential run and just turned 40. Leaving a baseball game, he saw a car strike his 6-year-old boy (his youngest child and only son), who sailed through the air and scraped along the pavement. Gore ran to him and "called his name, but he was motionless, limp and still, without breath or pulse. His eyes were open with the nothingness stare of death, and we prayed, the two of us . . . with only my voice." Gore's son struggled to hold on to consciousness, two passing nurses gave him first aid, and teams of doctors saved his life and, over months, restored him to health.

Three coincidences stand out, two of them flagged by Gore: The accident happened at a crucial time in his life (after turning 40) and in his career (after losing a presidential race): propitious moments for revelations. The big coincidence is the name Gore called out to his child. Gore's injured son is also Al—Albert Gore III. Albert Gore Sr. is, of course, Gore's father and predecessor in the Senate. (The first senator and his son were known as Big Al and Little Al.) Gore is the middle of three Als: The man looking at his injured son grew up defined, by others and by himself, as a son.

In the version he told at the 1992 convention, Gore added an important detail: He saw his "reflection in the empty stare of a boy waiting for his second breath of life." The literal meaning is unclear: Maybe Gore saw an actual reflection of his face in his son's eyes; maybe he saw the general family resemblance. The emotional meaning is clear enough: In the almost-dead Al Gore III, Al Gore Jr. saw himself.

I am not trying to make a long-range diagnosis, only trying to read a man's own words, which he defines as important, as we would a poem or a novel. What the words tell me is that Al Gore is depressed. He is depressed because he feels dead. That is what depression is: death to hope, to energy, to vitality. An awful event made Gore's state of mind vivid, but Gore brought his own depression to the event.

To read *Earth in the Balance* with a view to what it tells us about its author, apart from whatever it may tell us about the earth or Western culture, is to confirm the impression. In the key philosophical chapter, "Dysfunctional Civilization," Gore writes that "[f]eelings represent the essential link between mind and body or . . . between our intellect and the physical world. . . . Modern civilization assumes a profound separation between the two." But Al Gore, speaker and campaigner, has been enacting just such a separation for years. "The unnatural task of a disembodied mind is to somehow ignore the intense psychic pain that comes from the constant nagging awareness of what is missing: the experience of living in one's body as a fully integrated physical and mental being." But who in modern politics is less integrated, physically and mentally, than Gore? Whose powerful mind is more disembodied? "But the cleavage between mind and body, intellect and nature, has created a kind of psychic pain at the very root of the modern mind . . ."

Enough. *Earth in the Balance* purports to analyze our civilization. Leave aside the question of how well it does that; it certainly seems to describe its author. The book is subtitled *Ecology and the Human Spirit*; it might also be subtitled *Al Gore Out of Balance*.

How did Gore get this way? That is something his biographers will have to tell us. What matters to us now are the explanations and solutions he offers for our problem, and how they flow from his problem. In "Dysfunctional Civilization" Gore reaches for the addiction model, that

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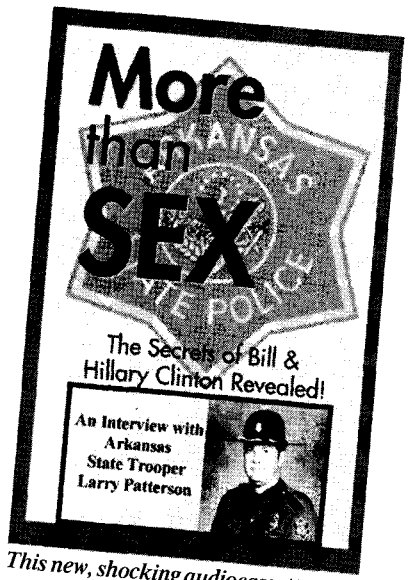

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favorite of Therapy Lite. Twelve-step programs have helped millions, but they have also created an arsenal of terms that Americans fatuously misapply to anything and everything. As a description of consumerism (Gore's meaning: We buy more than we need or want, to distract us from our ruptured world), the addiction model is questionable; as a description of depression (my interpretation of his meaning), it is worthless.

More to the point, Gore has adopted a strategy he ascribes to our dysfunctional civilization: One of the best ways of "ignoring psychic pain is to distract oneself from it, to do something so pleasurable or intense or otherwise absorbing that the pain is forgotten." Hence all his wild shouting, his whipped-up rhetoric, his phony wars against Nazi producers and Stalinist consumers. Gore rages and blusters to give himself the illusion that he is alive. I rant, therefore I am.

Gore could, accidentally, be on to something about the environment or recent Western philosophy. C. S. Lewis, in *The Abolition of Man*, gave a similar, if subtler, critique of triumphalist scientism. But C. S. Lewis is not running for president. And Lewis did not assail his opponents in such

Gore rages and blusters to give himself the illusion that he is alive. I rant, therefore I am.

messianic terms. The tone and vocabulary Gore uses to address his pet issue show a perturbed spirit, which bodes ill for his judgment should he become president. We want politicians to address problems because the problems are serious, not to prove to themselves that the problems are not too scary.

There have been presidents with screws loose before, and not all of them have been bad. The classic case is the melancholy Lincoln (though any man of sensibility would have been made melancholy by the Civil War's casualty rate). Benjamin Franklin called tempestuous John Adams "always an honest man, often a wise one, but sometimes in some things absolutely out of his senses." John Kennedy's drug use and satyriasis seem not to have wrecked his administration.

Then there have been the weird bad presidents. Woodrow Wilson's mad grandiosity wrecked the post–World War I world, and won him the dubious honor of being the only president to be studied by Sigmund Freud. Nixon's paranoid suspicion helped his enemies bring him down. Bill Clinton's arrested development created almost a *sede vacante* in the office.

President Gore would not bear his sufferings in silence. The issue onto which he has displaced his personal concerns has given rise to a burgeoning field of international law, and has major economic ramifications. He should not be encouraged to clip our sovereignty or pick our pockets in order to repair himself. **NR**

State of the Conservatives

We are all Clintonites now

RAMESH PONNURU

DOES the conservative movement need to take some lithium? As the *Washington Post*'s Thomas B. Edsall recently observed, over the last five years its mood has swung from giddy optimism to despair and back again. The arc can be traced in the pronouncements of individual conservatives. Less than a year ago, Bill Bennett was despairing of the American public's moral insipidity, as evidenced by its conspicuous lack of outrage at Bill Clinton's misconduct. Now he blesses George W. Bush's efforts to put a smiley face on the Republican party. Some of the same conservatives who were broaching the subject of justified revolution a few years ago have fallen behind the Texas governor as the unlikely leader of their insurrection.

These changes of mood are neither surprising nor particularly unhealthy. They reflect changed circumstances, for one thing. After several years of watching congressional Republicans play Wile E. Coyote to the president's Road Runner—their every trap exploding in their faces—conservatives can now look forward to each morning's newspaper, with its fresh revelations of the Gore campaign's incompetence.

Besides, mood swings are notoriously part of growing up. The 1994 Republican sweep left conservatives with a foolish and self-destructive, but also quite understandable, sense of their invincibility. People who believe in their inevitable triumph, of course, inevitably get their comeuppance—after which their grand expectations may curdle into excessive disillusionment. Attaining a majority, for a movement no less than for a teenager, involves moving to a third stage, in which the difficulties and imperfections of adult life inspire neither denial nor despair.

The real trouble with the conservative mood is not that it is mercurial. It is that it may be delusional. To support Gov. Bush as the best candidate available to conservatives would be one thing. It is quite another to describe him as the son of Ronald Reagan rather than of his actual father, as some conservatives have come close to doing. The overrating of Bush's conservatism (and of his electability, for that matter) is part of a general overrating of conservatism's prospects, even as it is evidence that those prospects are in fact not good.

Whatever they may say, conservatives know in their bones that their position is weak. Fear, after all, not confidence, is what motivates the stampede toward Bush—a stampede in which conservative voters as well as GOP hierarchs have

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participated. A lot of conservatives seem not to want to hear a word of criticism of the governor, much less a debate.

What these conservatives sense is that, at a level of politics deeper than the fortunes of the political parties, the ground is shifting away from them. What they have *not* noticed is that the 2000 election is shaping up to be a ratification not of conservatism but of Clintonism—and will be so even if the Republicans win.

Dick Armey, speaking to the Heritage Foundation on October 13, took a different view: "I can honestly tell you that, more than at any time in my life, our ideas and policies are on the rise." He has a case. Nobody believes in the planned economy, or wage and price controls, anymore; the budget is in surplus, inflation low, welfare reformed. The movement for school choice is enjoying its first halting successes. Almost as many Americans are now willing to call themselves "pro-life" as "pro-choice." In last year's elections, the Democrats came in third (getting only 18 percent of younger voters) in *Minnesota*—the land of Walter Mondale, Eugene McCarthy, and Hubert Humphrey. This, mind you, was amidst what was generally seen as a liberal resurgence. Social democrats may be in power throughout the industrialized world, but they have no choice but to implement a conservative program, however slowly and reluctantly.

If this optimistic case is to prevail, Bill Clinton's successes must be explained away as having nothing to do with his unconservative politics. They must be attributed to the accident of a booming economy and stock market, Clinton's freakish political talents, a biased press, Republican missteps, and a hundred other things. Many of these explanations have merit. Yet even taken together, they seem inadequate. It is revealing that conservatives often seem to suggest that Clinton has cast a spell on the public and that

■

The election is shaping up to be a ratification not of conservatism but of Clintonism—and will be so even if the Republicans win.

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the Congress is too cowardly to resist him—revealing because this is an explanation that comes uncomfortably close to the one liberals had for Ronald Reagan's success in the 1980s.

Liberals took a long time to recognize that Reagan's success had anything to do with what he stood for; even today, many people place more stress on "the Reagan demeanor," as Armey did in his speech. (Gov. Bush, he said, "embodies" this demeanor: "Like Reagan, he is sunny, he is optimistic, and, yes, he's compassionate—because he recognizes that

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On Conservatives: "This test is not going to tell you whether you're a racist or a liberal." – Previewing his prime-time special *The Racial Attitudes and Consciousness Exam (RACE)*, Sept. 5, 1989, *Today*

On Ken Starr: "Scott, as you and I both know, a popular move these days is to make a titillating charge and then have the media create the frenzy. Given Kenneth Starr's track record, should we suspect that he's trying to do with innuendo that which he has been unable to do with evidence?" – to CBS reporter Scott Pelley, Jan. 21, 1998, *Public Eye with Bryant Gumbel*

On Taxes: "It is certain the President won't mention the 'T' word, and yet taxes are very much at the heart of what all our potential solutions are. How long can both sides pretend that a hike's not needed?" – Jan. 31, 1990, *Today*

On Reagan: "Largely as a result of the policies and priorities of the Reagan administration, more people are becoming poor and staying poor in this country than at any time since World War II." – July 17, 1989, *Today*

On Talk Radio: "....Right-wing talk show hosts like Rush Limbaugh, Bob Grant, Oliver North, G. Gordon Liddy, Michael Reagan, and others take to the air every day with basically the same format: detail a problem, blame the government or a group, and invite invective from like-minded people. Never do most of the radio hosts encourage outright violence, but the extent to which their attitudes may embolden and encourage some extremists has clearly become an issue." – April 25, 1995, *Today*

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conservatism, like America itself, is inherently sunny and optimistic and compassionate." Where does one begin?) Just as liberals were unwilling to concede that Reagan's policies were popular—and my apologies to him for this comparison—conservatives are making the same mistake about Clinton.

And even when the substance of Clinton's politics *is* credited for his success, it is usually misunderstood. The press, and those Republicans who take their cues from it, has deduced that Clinton stands for a combination of social liberalism and economic conservatism; that this mix of tight money and loose morals is extremely popular; and that savvy Republicans such as Bush are tailoring their politics to suit this fashion.

This consensus is pretty much false from top to bottom. If social conservatism is dooming the Republicans, why has every major social-conservative initiative of the Republican Congress passed by lopsided, bipartisan majorities? The ban on partial-birth abortion passed the House 295-136, and the Senate 63-34. The anti–gay-marriage bill: 342-67 in the House, 85-16 in the Senate.

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If our victories are all victories that Clinton can applaud or at least accept, to say that we are winning is, in a way, to say that we are all Clintonites now.

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The kernel of truth within the consensus is that Clinton does indeed favor abortion-on-demand and oppose nationalizing the banks. But these are not exactly pressing issues for most voters. And to them, Clinton looks much more socially conservative than the Democrats of old. The political weakness of post-'60s liberalism was its perceived excesses on issues of race, crime, sex and family, and work. Clinton systematically addressed each vulnerability: He dissed Sister Souljah, came out for the death penalty, opposed same-sex marriage, and pledged to end "welfare as we know it." The end of the Cold War aided this project by ending a set of debates that had reinforced liberals' image as weak, unrealistic, and unpatriotic.

As Ben Wattenberg put it in the title of a book Clinton studied, "values matter most." Freed from the responsibility of defending social liberalism, Clinton was able to go on offense over the issue of government activism for the middle class. The battle over Medicare was the biggest issue on this front, but Clinton proposals on health, education, child care, etc., gave voters something at every stage of their lives, from cradle to grave. Government activism was no longer subverting widely cherished values, but supporting the values of family and security—a strategy I've dubbed "values statism." It is this solicitude for middle-class values and interests, and not a reputation for compassion toward the downtrodden, that is behind the success of Clintonian liberalism.

To say that the Left has abandoned the most damaging parts of its creed is to say that the Right has won on all the things the public cared about: crime, welfare, racial militance, anti-Americanism, overt hostility to religion. But this does not mean that somehow conservatives are "winning the debate" generally. People who see victory in the fact that Clinton agrees with us on such matters as the undesirability of a 70 percent tax rate forget that it also means that we agree with *him*. If our victories are all victories that Clinton can applaud or at least accept, to say that we are winning is, in a way, to say that we are all Clintonites now.

This seems to be a depressingly accurate description of all too many Republicans. They're not talking about closing the Commerce Department anymore, or even the National Endowment for the Arts. It was a Republican, Bill Paxon, who first proposed that the federal government finance the hiring of 100,000 teachers. Some of the most conservative Republicans in Congress are supporting bills to regulate health insurance. The Republican governors, for their part, have been much worse on spending than the Congress, and that spending is going to the familiar Clintonite priorities of health, education, child care, etc.

And what of Gov. Bush? Most observers of the primaries have made a hobby of tracking his supposed attempts to distance himself from the social Right. But this project can be sustained only by refusing to hear what the governor is saying. The fact is that while Bush has criticized conservatives such as Robert Bork for what he considers excessive pessimism, he has not retreated an inch on policy. He is comfortable with the current Republican platform language on abortion; he has not given up the possibility of someday passing a Human Life Amendment. True, he doesn't talk much about these issues, but in what way is this a departure from previous Republican candidates? Neither Bob Dole nor Bush's father talked much about the moral issues either. When Bush does talk about them, he is often more eloquent than either of those two—admittedly, no Ciceronian feat.

Bush's attempts to distance himself from the Right have never taken the form of denouncing "intolerant" social conservatives who want to "impose" their views on our morally pluralistic populace. He *has* criticized the "destructive mindset" that says "that if government would only get out of our way, all our problems would be solved." This "approach," he says, has "no higher goal, no nobler purpose, than 'leave us alone.'" In another speech, Bush said, "Too often, my party has confused the need for limited government with a disdain for government itself."

What Bush is repudiating, in theory and practice, is not social conservatism but economic conservatism, or more precisely libertarianism. Bush's apparent and, according to his spokesmen, unintentional slap at Judge Bork drew a lot of ink. Less remarked was his earlier swipe at Grover Norquist's notion of a "leave-us-alone coalition." The leave-us-alone slogan had driven neoconservatives—such as Mike Gerson, who wrote Bush's lines, and Bill Bennett and Gertrude Himmelfarb, who gave advance approval to some of them—up the wall. What Bush thinks he is accomplishing by taking up cudgels for them is unclear.

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Bush makes a reasonable point when he notes that disdain for government does not necessarily serve the cause of limited, effective government. It's a lot harder to make the case that the Republican domestic program has been too antistatist. The Republican "revolution" of 1995, which proposed merely to keep the growth of federal spending to $350 billion over seven years, was hardly the anarchist riot Bush's rhetoric implies. Antigovernment fervor surely does not describe today's Congress, which has increased funding for many of the programs those revolutionaries sought to terminate.

Bush's turn away from libertarianism, however, cannot be dismissed as merely rhetorical overkill. In no area has Bush called for a substantial retrenchment of federal activity. His focus has been on how government can be used to further a "private-sector" War on Poverty. And Bush is hardly alone in abandoning limited government as an important practical goal. John McCain quickly seconds every philosophical pronouncement the governor makes. Pat Buchanan is far more interested in using government to promote his ends than in cutting it down to size. Gary Bauer, in a more modest and principled way, has left the economic-conservative fold on taxes, Social Security, and trade. Libertarian ideas are in retreat in the conservative intellectual world, too.

All of these moves are motivated, essentially, by the fact that antistatism doesn't have much of a constituency in American politics. Or to put it another way, libertarians don't pull their electoral weight within the conservative coalition. That's why values statism has been so successful. And that's what Bush and McCain, in particular, are responding to. It's not that there is a huge constituency for a big-government conservatism; it's that Republicans who have given up on limited government have to come up with something else to talk about.

If Republicans don't know how to beat values statism—and if the public hates political argument, as it surely does—the obvious response for Republicans is to co-opt and defuse, turn down the volume on the issues, and run on personality. Which is to say, to attempt to win within the confines of Clintonism, thus solidifying it as a national consensus.

Large portions of the GOP, especially the business class, are quite content with such a strategy. The party now reflects the business class's view of the world more thoroughly than at any other point since Ronald Reagan's nomination in 1980. That class is hostile to ideological crusades. Mindful of "diversity," it is especially hostile to crusades against racial preferences (as are Bush and McCain). It does not feel guilty about the poor, but thinks it ought to feel guilty; hence "compassionate conservatism" appeals to its sentimentality. The triumph of the business class within the GOP is not a wholly bad thing,

Small Company's New Golf Ball Flies Too Far; Could Obsolete Many Golf Courses.

Pro Hits 400-Yard Tee Shots During Test Round

Want To Shoot An Eagle or Two ?

By Charlie Allen

YALESVILLE, CT – A small golf company in Connecticut has created a powerful, new ball that flies like a U-2, putts with the steady roll of a cue ball and bites the green on approach shots like a dropped cat. But don't look for it on weekend TV. Long-hitting pros could make a joke out of some of golf's finest courses with it. One pro who tested the ball drove it 400 yards, reaching the green on all but the longest par-four's. Scientific tests by an independent lab using a hitting machine prove the ball outflies 15 major brands by up to 22 yards.

The ball's extraordinary distance comes partly from a revolutionary new dimple design that keeps the ball aloft longer. But there's also a secret change in the core that makes it rise faster off the clubhead. Another change reduces air drag. The result is a ball that gains altitude quickly, then sails like a glider. None of the changes is noticeable in the ball itself.

Despite this extraordinary performance, the company has a problem. A spokesman put it this way: "In golf you need endorsements and TV publicity. This is what gets you in the pro shops and stores where 95% of all golf products are sold. Unless the pros use your ball on TV, you're virtually locked out of these outlets. TV advertising is too expensive to buy on your own, at least for us.

"Now, you've seen how far this ball can fly. Can you imagine a pro using it on TV and eagle-ing par-four's? He would turn the course into a par-three, and real men don't play par-three's. This new fly-power forces us to sell it without relying on pros or pro-shops. One way is to sell it direct from our plant. That way we can keep the name printed on the ball a secret that only a buyer would know. There's more to golf than tournaments, you know."

The company guarantees a golfer a prompt refund if the new ball doesn't cut five to ten strokes off his or her average score. Simply return the balls–new or used–to the address below. "No one else would dare do that," boasted the company's director.

If you would like an eagle or two, here's your best chance yet. Write your name and address and "Code Name S" (the ball's R&D name) on a piece of paper and send it along with a check (or your credit card number and expiration date) to NGC Golf **(Dept. S-525)**, 60 Church Street, Yalesville, CT 06492. Or phone 800-285-3900 anytime. No P.O. boxes. One dozen "S" balls cost $24.95, two to five dozen are only $22.00 each, six dozen are only $109.00. You save $40.70 ordering six. Shipping and handling is only $5.00 no matter how large your order. Specify white or Hi-Vision yellow.

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but there's no reason to dress it up as some profound philosophical advance for conservatism, as some writers are attempting to do.

The libertarians, bless their apolitical hearts, mostly have no idea that they're losing ground. Ed Crane, president of the Cato Institute, sees clearly that compassionate conservatism is aimed squarely at people like him. Many libertarians, however, are pleased by the mistaken belief that it is aimed at social conservatives. And some libertarians are toying with the idea that they should ally with liberals rather than conservatives, the theory apparently being that it's more important to defend their precious right to clone themselves than to privatize Social Security.

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What's striking about this primary pre-season is how little Bush has been tugged rightward by conservative organizations or rivals.

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Should social conservatives care about the eclipse of libertarianism? Marvin Olasky, a prominent religious conservative and a Bush adviser, is not worried. He told *The New Republic*, "Let's throw away the budget cutters. I see that coming with Bush. I see that as part of a governing alliance." The weakness of libertarianism, however, weakens moral conservatism too. First, as a simple matter of coalition politics: Religious conservatives are not a silent majority of the public, as they have sometimes imagined, but a large minority, and therefore they need allies.

More important, the abandonment of limited government as a goal leaves social conservatives without some of their best ideas—indeed, with no serious and achievable agenda. To revive the stigma against socially disruptive and immoral behavior will require a rollback of the antidiscrimination laws that make it impossible for employers and landlords to punish such behavior. Free-market pressures will have to be brought to bear on the schools to break the lock that liberals have on the education of our children. It will be difficult to promote thrift and prudence while advertising for state lotteries, treating bankruptcy lightly, maintaining generous welfare benefits, and bailing out banks whenever they make foolish loans to Third World countries.

Or take modern health care. Through a complex array of policies, the federal government and state governments have been socializing costs for years. Since this causes costs to explode, health-care administrators feel increasingly compelled to contain costs by discouraging some behaviors (such as smoking tobacco) and encouraging others (such as euthanasia and abortion). Thus does public policy promote the replacement of the old morality by a new one. And this is to say nothing of the financial fraud and the whiny sense of entitlement that these policies also abet.

If the welfare state has undermined traditional virtues, and not just among the underclass, it seems quixotic to attempt to revive them without reining in the welfare state. Social conservatives would be left making ineffectual symbolic gestures (such as keeping outspoken social liberals from becoming ambassadors), or calling for the impossible (such as strict censorship). Without limited government as a lodestar, moreover, social conservatives will be tempted to pursue the dead end of Buchananism.

The lack of a mass constituency for limited government, then, has been profoundly debilitating for conservatives. And it has left them holding a remarkably weak hand for 2000. The Republican presidential primaries (including the run-up to them) have been one of the main pressure points conservatives have in American life. The bureaucracy, the courts, the media, the universities, Hollywood, the foundation world, the publishing houses: All are dominated by opponents of conservatism, and as previously mentioned, corporate America is hardly the bastion of conservatism the Left takes it to be. The primaries are therefore all the more important. Yet conservatives are being marginalized. Their organizations—from the NRA to the Christian Coalition, from the Family Research Council to U.S. Term Limits—are in varying degrees of disarray and enjoy less influence than they did only a few years ago.

It must be said that Bush has not taken many actual positions at odds with antistatist conservatism; his innovation has been a matter more of tone, emphasis, and language. Bush has, indeed, run a more conservative campaign than he has had to. That, in a way, is the point: What's striking about this primary pre-season is how little Bush has been *tugged* rightward by conservative organizations or rivals. (Scott Reed, Bob Dole's campaign manager, has wistfully remarked that his candidate had no such luck.) Movement conservatives have been unable even to mount serious presidential candidacies. Phil Gramm at least limped into the Iowa caucuses in 1996. This time around, the only conservative candidates with any elective experience—John Ashcroft and Dan Quayle—have already dropped out. Worse, conservatives have no champion on the horizon for 2004.

Rather than ask why this is so, those conservatives who have noticed have preferred to indulge in escapist fantasies. The campaigns of Gary Bauer and Steve Forbes look likely to marginalize the worthy causes for which both men have fought so valiantly. It is a sad performance. And whatever Bush's own position on the ideological spectrum, as a very practical politician he will respond to the correlation of forces indicated by that performance.

None of which means that it makes no difference who wins the 2000 election; it will make a difference, on everything from foreign policy to the courts to taxes. The inexorable victories conservatives foresaw just a few years ago should not be replaced by a vision of inevitable decline. Conservatism may not be "inherently sunny," even in America, but neither is it despairing. Conservatives can have a bright future if they find a way to swell the constituency for limited government, using any tool that happens to be at hand (very much including Gov. Bush). The rise of the investor class is a hopeful sign, if a largely unexploited one. Conservatives will achieve nothing, however, unless they first look closely at the state of their movement, without sentiment or illusion. **NR**

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The Meaning of Heritage

On October 20, William F. Buckley Jr. delivered a speech on the subject of "heritage." The event took place at The Pierre hotel in New York City. Mr. Buckley's speech was the last in a series of speeches sponsored by the Heritage Foundation of Washington, D.C., a series designed to mark the Foundation's twenty-fifth anniversary. Mr. Buckley was introduced by his son, Christopher, editor of Forbes FYI *and the author of several acclaimed novels, the latest of which is* Little Green Men.

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

I FIRST met William F. Buckley Jr. in September 1952. I was struck by his considerable . . . height. From the first moment I set eyes on him, I found myself looking up to him. Over the years, I reached his approximate height in feet and inches, but I have never stopped looking up to him.

The theme tonight is "Heritage." Your honoree is well suited to talk about that. His own roots go deep in the American soil. His grandfather was a Texas sheriff. The family does not widely advertise that, owing to the fact that he was a Democrat. The sheriff's son became a Texas oilman, from which point on the family's voting registration remained staunchly Republican.

William F. Buckley Sr., the father of tonight's honoree, was by all accounts a remarkable man. Self-made, devoutly Catholic, a risk-taker. He once talked Pancho Villa out of shooting a train conductor for committing *lèse-majesté*. He indignantly refused to become the American governor-civil of Veracruz after Woodrow Wilson trained the U.S. Navy's guns on the city. A few years after that, having lent his support to the losing side in that week's revolution, he was obliged to depart Mexico under sentence of death. He came home to America, married a young Catholic beauty from New Orleans, and raised ten children, not one of whom grew up speaking English as a first language. It was said of him that he worshiped three things: God, his family, and education . . . in that order.

That was the heritage that William F. Buckley Jr. inherited. Not a bad one. Like his father, he grew up devout, risk-taking, and *occasionally* supporting the losing side, though ultimately, as intellectual godfather to the movement that produced the election of Ronald Reagan, he was a very big winner. Yet even when he was on the losing side, he managed, unlike his father, to stay on the right side of the firing line.

At Yale, he made a glorious pain in the ass of himself with an administration and faculty that in his view had turned its back on that college's heritage. His first book—of some 40, at last count—sought to reassert that heritage and those principles, which he held sacred, then as now. It was Act One in a remarkable public life.

He served in the CIA and founded a magazine whose stated mission was "to stand athwart history, yelling 'Stop!'" He has written a thrice-weekly column for almost 40 years. He ran for Mayor of New York, making the Conservative party safe for James L. Buckley and Alfonse D'Amato. He became host of *Firing Line*, the most substantive dialogue ever produced on television. Two months from now he will tape the last show, and enter the record books as the longest-running single host of a television program in history.

He was delegate to the United Nations, where for a brief shining moment he made life intolerable for so many deserving tinpot potentates who up to then had viewed that forum as a dumping ground for their latest grievances about the United States, enemy of humanity.

At 50 he became a bestselling novelist and sailed himself across the first of many oceans. Concert pianist at 60. Ex-concert pianist at 61.

He has been there, done that. Flown in the cockpit of an F-4 *Phantom* jet, and dived three miles deep to peer into the skeleton of the *Titanic*. One March day on Long Island Sound after an accident, he dragged a drowning friend a half-mile through freezing water and saved his life, an incident that should excite his biographer, if trends in current biography are any indication.

I've watched the President of the United States in the White House hang a medal around his neck and call him a hero. I've listened as Cardinal O'Connor—who is in our prayers tonight—addressed him in a room crowded with important prelates and called him "the jewel in the crown of American Catholicism." And I have heard my mother say one thousand times, "Your father is impossible."

And you know, they were *all* right.

To those voices I can only add my small prayer of gratitude tonight to Providence for being so bountiful that day in 1952 in the matter of my own heritage.

Ladies and gentlemen, William F. Buckley Jr.

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

MY father was a friend of Albert Jay Nock who, silver-headed with the trim moustache and rimless glasses, was often at our house in Sharon, Connecticut. There, at age thirteen or fourteen, I scurried about, going to some pains to avoid being trapped into hearing anything spoken by someone so manifestly professorial. Most of what my father would relate about him—relate to me and my siblings—was amusing and informative, not so much about such Nockean specialties as Thomas Jefferson or Rabelais or the recondite assurances of the Remnant; but informative about him. I remember hearing that Mr. Nock had made some point of informing my father that he never read any newspapers, judging them to be useless and, really, *infra dignitatem*. But one day my father stopped by at the little inn Mr. Nock inhabited in nearby Lakeville, Connecticut, to escort Mr. Nock to lunch, as arranged. Inadvertently my father arrived a half hour ear-

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lier than the planned meeting time. He opened the door to Mr. Nock's quarters and came upon him on hands and knees, surrounded by the massive Sunday editions of the *New York Herald Tribune* and the *New York Times*. My father controlled his amusement on the spot, but not later, when he chatted delightedly with his children about the eccentricities of this august figure, this great stylist—my father preferred good prose to any other pleasure on earth, if that can be said credibly of someone who sired ten children. He thought Mr. Nock the most eloquent critic in America of, among other things, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his shortcomings.

My father's disapproval of Mr. Roosevelt engaged the collaborative attention of my brother Jim. He was fifteen and had a brand new rowboat. He launched it after painting on its side a prolix baptismal name. He called it: *My Alabaster Baby, or To Hell with Roosevelt.* When Father heard this, he instructed Jimmy immediately to alter the name. "He is the President of the United States," my father said, no further elaboration on FDR's immunity from certain forms of raillery being thought necessary; besides which, my father observed, his days in the White House were numbered.

Because that summer Wendell Willkie ran against FDR. My father went to the polls and voted for Willkie, thinking him a reliable adversary of America's march towards war. A year later, in conversation with Mr. Nock, my father disclosed that he had voted for Willkie, thus departing from a near-lifelong resolution, never to vote for any political candidate. He now reaffirmed, with Mr. Nock's hearty approval, his determination to renew his vows of abstinence, having been exposed to the later Willkie who was now revealed—I remember the term he used—as a "mountebank."

They are all mountebanks, Mr. Nock said. It was at about that time that I began reading Albert Jay Nock, from whom I imbibed deeply the anti-statist tradition which he accepted, celebrated, and enhanced. One of his protégés, who served also as his literary executor, was Frank Chodorov. He became my closest intellectual friend early in the Fifties. Chodorov accepted wholly the anarchical conclusions of Mr. Nock, though when we worked together, on *The Freeman* and at NATIONAL REVIEW, Mr. Chodorov temporized with that total disdain for politics that had overcome his mentor. Mr. Chodorov permitted himself to express relative approval, from time to time, for this or another political figure, notably Senator Robert A. Taft in 1952.

I remember, in the work of Nock and in the work of American historical figures he cited, the felt keenness of that heritage, the presumptive resistance to state activity. It was very nearly devotional in character. It was in one of his essays, I think, that I first saw quoted John Adams's admonition that the state seeks to turn every contingency into an excuse for enhancing power in itself, and of course Jefferson's adage that the government can only do something *for* the people in proportion as it can do something *to* the people. The ultimate repudiation of the institution was pronounced by a noted contemporary of Albert Jay Nock, his friend H. L. Mencken. He pronounced apodictically that the state is "the enemy of all well-disposed, decent, and industrious men." I remember thinking that that formulation seemed to me to stretch things a bit far, and so began my own introduction to the practical limits of anarchy.

But the American legacy—opposition to unnecessary activity by the state—was from the start an attitude I found entirely agreeable, in my own thinking, and in my student journalism. And when NATIONAL REVIEW was launched I found myself in the company of thoughtful and learned anti-statists. Our managing editor, Suzanne La Follette, had served as managing editor of the original *Freeman*, of which Mr. Nock was the founder and editor. That magazine, after several years, failed, in the 1920s. In his memoirs Mr. Nock reported fatalistically that it was a journal that had had its day on earth, and should, after four years, be ready to phase out, even as, a generation later, there were those who thought it appropriate that the Mont Pelerin Society, after 25 years, should end its life, uncomplaining. And then too, Mr. Nock conceded retrospectively, there might have been weaknesses in his own administration of the enterprise. "As a judge of talent," he wrote in his recollection, "I am worth a ducal salary. As a judge of character, I cannot distinguish between a survivor of the saints and the devil's ragbaby."

Intercollegiate Studies Institute

Albert Jay Nock

Max Eastman was also with us in 1955. Now a heated enemy of the state, the poet-philosopher-journalist had been a fervent Communist. James Burnham, who was by this time questioning the authority of government even to outlaw fireworks on the Fourth of July in private hands, had been a leading Trotskyist. Frank Meyer was for some years a high official of the Communist Party in Great Britain and in America. His newfound antipathy to collectivist thought stayed with him to the very end. He was suffering terminally from his cancer, on that last Friday I visited with him in Woodstock. He told me hoarsely that he hoped to join the Catholic Church before he died but was held back by that clause in the Creed that spoke of the communion of saints, which he judged to be a concession to collectivist formulations. He overcame his misgiving the very next day after my visit, on Saturday, and died the following day, on Easter Sunday, at peace with the Lord who made us all equal, but individuated. And of course Frank Chodorov came to us after the resurrected *Freeman* folded: He had just published a book. Frank chose a subtle way of making his point about the undesirability of collectivism: He called his book *One Is a Crowd*.

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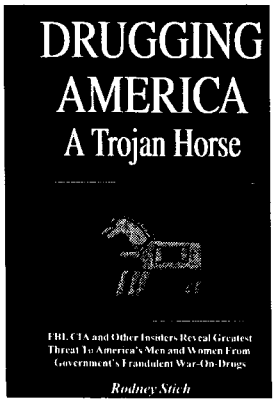
The Ugly Truth About the Government's War on Drugs and How It Threatens America's Men and Women

Drugging America—A Trojan Horse



Dozens of FBI, CIA, DEA, other government agents, and former drug traffickers reveal in this book:

- **Why drug smuggling has not been reduced despite billions of dollars spent.**
- **The truth** about drug smuggling by CIA, DEA, and military personnel in collaboration with foreign drug lords and domestic crime groups.
- The **coverup of these activities** by members of Congress, the Justice Department, federal judges, and much of the broadcast and print media.
- **Drug money going to both political parties**, giving Democrats and Republicans reasons to continue the status quo.
- **That simultaneous with drugging America, an army of government informants, agents, and prosecutors prey upon America's men and women**, often fraudulently charging innocent people with drug-related offenses, and often using perjured testimony.
- How to **minimize the chances of being falsely charged with a drug offense, despite your innocence.**
- **Actual stories of people operating secret CIA airlines and financial operations, describing the drug-related activities, and pilots flying drugs for the CIA**, some of whom were house-guests of Colombian drug lords.
- How **Justice Department personnel protect major drug organizations bringing tons of drugs into the United States, while prosecuting men and women with peanut quantity of drugs** or no-drug drug conspiracies concocted in the prosecutor's fertile imagination.
- The **grave national implications** of these activities.
- **What you can do to repeal mandatory minimum-sentences statutes and halt the corrupt misuse of the conspiracy and forfeiture statutes**, and bring about the release of men and women with grotesque prison sentences.
- What you can do to expose and **bring to justice the real criminals** in the drug business—people operating under the cloak of government "authority" and "national security"!
- Learn which government and non-government groups will block corrective actions.

***Drugging America* is written by former federal investigator Rodney Stich**, the author of three editions of *Defrauding America* and *Unfriendly Skies,* both of which have received excellent reviews and had been considered for television series.

Drugging America, 610 pages, hardcover, $28+$4 shipping.
Defrauding America, 753 pages, hardcover, 3rd ed., $28+$4 shipping.
Unfriendly Skies, 650 pages, soft-cover, 3rd ed., $25+$4 shipping.
All three provide a "college" course on government corruption—$81 postpaid.
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OPPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITY

How might we reconcile the American heritage of opposition to distorted growth in the state with the august, aspirant movement to which the Founding Fathers plighted their trust? The impulse to categorical renunciation, in the language of Mr. Nock and Frank Chodorov, ran up against what we at NATIONAL REVIEW deemed a sovereign historical responsibility, in those postwar years. It was to protect the American people, and their government—to protect the state, yes—from threats to its own existence. After the Soviet leaders had acquired the atom bomb, all the while reiterating a historical commitment to impose dominion over the whole world, the primary responsibility of our own state became at the very least coexistence, at best liberation. In the vigorous anti-Communist enterprise, we were joined by the most categorical anti-statists of the day, including Milton Friedman and Ayn Rand, even though to achieve our purposes meant forging alliances, military deployments abroad, and, yes, wars.

There would be no denying the relevance of John Adams's monitory words, because even as we developed the military and geopolitical advantages necessary to face down, and eventually to cause to collapse, the Communist aggressor, unrelated branches of government swelled. It was not only our defensive and deterrent capabilities that prospered. The contingencies of which Mr. Adams warned were everywhere inducing public-sector growth and government intervention, as for instance in university life after the first Soviet space launch. It was as if only federal dollars could attract 20-year-olds to science. The momentum brought us statist programs that all but took over graduate education. We issued regulations in the tens of thousands, regulations that direct much of what we do, or that keep us from doing what we otherwise might do. And today, while our military requirements are met with less than 4 percent of the gross national product, 22 percent of what we produce is commandeered by the federal government, in its feverish self-application of more and more lures and wiles, the better to seduce the voting public. There were those—I think of the late Murray Rothbard—who cried out against the politics of coexistence and liberation, but the perspective was so much the captive of an anti-statist obsession that his eyes squinted, and at the end he was incapable of distinguishing—he loudly boasted—between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the leaders of the United States. On this matter, in those frenzied days, I counter-preached that the man who pushes an old lady into the path of an oncoming truck, and the man who pushes an old lady out of the path of an oncoming truck, are not to be denounced even-handedly as men who push old ladies around.

■

I wonder whether this truncation—the love of God's other teachings, the love of one's neighbor—dismembered from the love of God, is philosophically reliable?

■

GOD AND MAN, AS ALWAYS

In college, in the late Forties, I had remarked a general conformity by the majority of our faculty on the matter of state enterprise. Almost uniformly the scholars urged its expansion. I noted also what I thought the parlous direction of religious intellectual life, condescendingly treated, when it wasn't actively disdained. Was there—is there—a nexus? Mr. Nock began his professional life as an ordained minister of God; but then, I remembered irreverently, at age 40 he suddenly (by contemporary account) left his wife and two sons to pursue his famous career as a dilettante scholar. The state got in his way, and we do not know whether God ever asserted Himself. Although not combative on the religious question in his writings, Mr. Nock left the discerning to suppose that he had abandoned his sometime commitment to Christian dogma, though not to the secular transcription of the Christian idea, which is that all men are equal and born to be free. Whittaker Chambers said in passing that liberal democracy was a political reading of the Bible. Certainly we were cautioned very early, in theological thought, against coveting our neighbors' goods.

In my published reflections on the neglect of religion at Yale, I remembered, of course, the heritage of Christianity in the life of the country and of the university I had attended. That heritage was boldly proclaimed in the inaugural address of the scholar-historian who was president of Yale when I studied there. Charles Seymour had said in 1937, "I call on all members of the faculty, as members of a thinking body, freely to recognize the tremendous validity and power of the teachings of Christ in our life-and-death struggle against the forces of selfish materialism."

It appears to me now, sixty years after he spoke those words, that we can lay claim to having defeated the immediate threat to which Mr. Seymour pointed (when he spoke, Hitler had only eight years to live). But what he called selfish materialism is something we need always to pray about, if we remember to pray. In hindsight I note what may have been a careful circumlocution when the president of Yale, an American historian, spoke of the validity and power of the *teachings* of Christ in our life-and-death struggle. There is pretty wide support for the teachings of Christ, if we subtract from them that teaching which he obtrusively listed as the preeminent obligation of his flock, namely to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. Most of the elite in our culture have jettisoned this injunction. We're taught in effect that what's important in Christianity is the YMCA, not the church.

I wonder whether this truncation—the love of God's other teachings, the love of one's neighbor—dismembered from the love of God, is philosophically reliable? The old chestnut tells of the husband leaving the church service with downcast countenance after hearing the rousing sermon on the Ten Commandments. Suddenly he takes heart. "I never," he taps his wife on the arm, "made any graven images!"

But there are graven images here, and worship of them best describes some communicants.

The Founders sought out divine providence in several perspectives, as they gathered together to mint the American legacy. First, they staked out a claim to the "separate and

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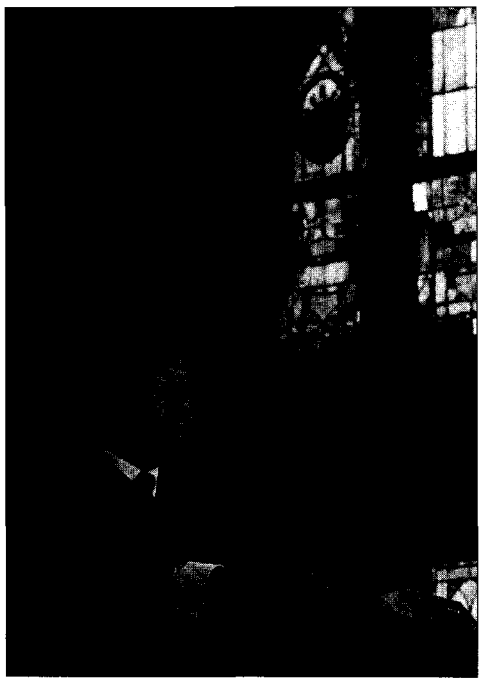
equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" entitled them. This tells us that, to assert persuasively the right of a people to declare their independence, something like a divine warrant was needed. The specific qualifications for such a warrant are not given—the signers weren't applying for a driver's license. Were they supplicants, appealing for divine favor? Or is it a part of our heritage that they posited a transcendent authority, whose acquiescence, in their enterprise, they deemed themselves entitled to? We do not find any answer to that in the Constitution. But the Declaration is surely the lodestar of constitutional assumption.

The second invocation asked "the Supreme Judge of the world" to aver the "rectitude" of the Founders' "intentions." The appeal was to sanction the drastic action the signers were now taking, a declaration not only of independence, but of war—war against the resident authorities, with the inevitable loss of human lives.

And, finally, the signers were telling the world that they proceeded to independence "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence." This was Thomas Jefferson's variation on the conventional formulation, *Thy will be done.*

We had, then, a) an appeal to transcendent law, b) an appeal to transcendent modes of understanding the national perspective, and c) an appeal for transcendent solicitude. We are reminded of the widening gulf between that one part of our heritage, thought critical by the signers, and the secularist transformation; the attenuations of it today in the feel-good Judeo-Christianity which, however welcome its balm, gives off less than the heat sometimes needed to light critical fires. We read the speeches of Martin Luther King Jr., whose life we celebrate while tending to ignore the essence of his ideals, the ideals acclaimed by him (as by Abraham Lincoln) as the ground of his idealism. A bizarre paradox in the new secular order is the celebration of Dr. King's birthday, a national holiday acclaimed as the heartbeat of articulated idealism in race relations, conscientiously observed in our schools, with, however, scant thought given to Dr. King's own faith. What is largely overlooked, in the matter of Dr. King, is his Christian training and explicitly Christian commitment. Every student is familiar with the incantation, "I have a dream." Not many are familiar with the peroration. The closing words were Scriptural: "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." The sermon Martin Luther King preached at the Ebenezer Baptist Church two months before he was killed was selected by his votaries to be replayed at his funeral. It closed, "If I can do my duty as a Christian ought, then my living will not be in vain." George Washington would not have been surprised by Dr. King's formulation. Washington admonished against any "supposition" that "morality can be maintained without religion." "Reason and experience," he commented, "*both* forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." Two centuries before the advent of Dr. King, George Washington wrote with poetic force a letter to the Hebrew congregation of Savannah on the divine auspices of intercredal toleration. "May the same wonder-working Deity, who long since delivered the Hebrews from their Egyptian oppressors . . . continue to water them with the dews of heaven and make the inhabitants of every denomination participate in the temporal and spiritual blessings of that people whose God is Jehovah."


Corbis/Flip Schulke

Martin Luther King Jr. preaching at Ebenezer Baptist Church, 1964

The infrastructure of our governing assumption—that human beings are equal—derives from our conviction that they are singularly creatures of God. If they are less than that—mere evolutionary oddments—we will need to busy ourselves mightily to construct rationales for treating alike disparate elements of humanity which anthropological research might persuasively claim to be unequal. A professor newly appointed to Princeton has no problem with infanticide. Those who believe in metaphysical equality will resist any attempt to extend *homo sapiens* to *homo sapienter* by saying, What have such findings to do with the respect, civil and spiritual, that every American owes to every other American? The political turmoil of this year left us in moral incoherence. The most eloquent escapist, summoned to make the case against removal, following the impeachment vote, was former senator Dale Bumpers. In making his argument for the defendant he acknowledged that the presidential behavior had been, to use his own words, "indefensible," and "unforgivable." What he meant by indefensible, it transpired, was "defensible." What he meant by unforgivable was—something that should be forgiven. In the absence of durable perspectives, language loses its meaning and reality slips through the mind's grasp.

It is reassuring that our heritage, having finally excreted slavery and apartheid, appears to be in lively acquiescence on the matter of equality. We no longer suffer from civil encumbrances to the freedom to seek happiness, the search for which was held out to us in the Declaration as a birthright of the new republic. Yet the American Revolution was done entirely without the ideological afflatus that, a dozen years later, launched another revolution, this one symbolized by the guillotine. It never occurred to any of the signers to doubt the inevitable distempers Hamilton spoke of as a necessary part of the human experience. On the most dramatic eve in American history, the night of the third of July 1776, John Adams was, as usual, writing a letter to Abigail. He had zero illusions about human frailty. On the contrary, his words

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seethed with both excitement and trepidation. "The furnace of affliction," he wrote solemnly, "produces refinement in states as well as individuals." But to inaugurate the new regime would require, as he put it, a "purification from our vices, and an augmentation of our virtues, or there will be no blessings." In France it was postulated that, with the elimination of a social class, the wellsprings of human virtue would repopulate the land with a new breed. The succeeding revolution to that of the Jacobins came in Russia in the 20th century. Its lodestar was the elimination of property, an end of which would bring on an end to the causes of human friction.

The Founders had no such categorical illusions about the causes of human strife. James Madison cherished the prospect of a favorable *balance* in human performance, but a balance it would always be. "As there is a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust, so there are other qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence." Note, *a certain portion* of esteem and confidence. He went on: "Republican government presupposes the existence of these [last] qualities in a higher degree than any other form. Were the pictures which have been drawn by the political jealousy of some among us"—he meant by the term jealousy a resentful desire for others' advantages—"faithful likenesses of the human character," then "the inference would be that there is not sufficient virtue among men for self-government; and that nothing less than the chains of despotism can restrain them from destroying and devouring one another."

The harvest of "jealousy," to use Madison's term, is everywhere, as he expected. In contemporary language, there is romantic jealousy; at street level, there is rivalry; at the national political level, jealousy strives to make public laws and practices.

Here, I think, susceptibility to the vices John Adams pleaded that we guard against is critically encouraged by the amendment that authorized unequal taxation, giving constitutional rise to jealous appetites that have taken redistribution to the level of confiscatory legislation. Mr. Nock described what he considered the single most ominous institutional development of his lifetime, namely, as he put it, the "substitution of political for economic energy as a means of self-aggrandizement." It is tempting to build your house by enticing the legislature, rather than the market. Professor Hayek, looking back on the century he so singularly adorned, pointed to progressive taxation as the Achilles' heel of self-government. Even as a consensus flourishes that property should be protected, a consensus withers on the definition of property, which becomes now that much of a citizen's earnings as are left to him, or to his estate, by sufferance of Congress. The towering irreconcilability is the constitutional amendment that promises equal treatment under the law, and the successor—one-sentence—amendment that, fifty years later, authorized discriminatory taxation.

TONGUES UNTIED

In the 1950s, young American adults had the routine experiences—at college, after college, in the professional schools engaging business, law, medicine, the humanities. Those who got around to lifting their sights in search of perspective in politics had reason to wonder whether the infrastructure of marketplace thinking had been quite simply abandoned by the productive sector of the American establishment.

In the years immediately after the war, the productive community, browbeaten by twelve years of the New Deal, by four years of *dirigiste* policies in a military-minded economy, by the socialist emanations of postwar Europe, was listless in the defense of its own values. Men of affairs are—men of affairs. They do not linger over brewing consequences of intellectual and polemical torpor. I remember in my senior year the excruciating experience of seeing in public debate an American businessman trying hopelessly to contend against hardwired enthusiasts for statist activity. It was so also with the polished academic establishmentarians, who held out hoops at every trustees' meeting, through which our men of affairs would jump, as if trained to do so from childhood. With distressing frequency those who upheld the heritage left the stage or studio exposed to humiliation by the poverty of their resources. It's different now. We have substantially to thank for it the institution whose anniversary these lectures celebrate. What began as tinkertoy research grew in twenty-five years into the dominant think tank in the country.

The aim of the Heritage Foundation is to heighten economic and political literacy among those men and women whose decisions affect the course of the republic. In pursuit of this aim the Foundation had an exhilarating hour when Ronald Reagan was elected president in November of 1980. The new president found waiting for him in the White House three volumes of material designed to help him chart the course to take the nation back in the right direction. Sixty percent of the suggestions enjoined on the new president, I am advised, were acted upon (which is why Mr. Reagan's tenure was 60 percent successful).

The broader community of journalists, opinion-makers, and academics is hardly ignored. The masses of material generated by Heritage flow out into the major arteries of American thought. We rest more comfortable in the knowledge that high ideals have intoned their enduring pitch in the tumult of a century that strove mightily to inter the heritage of American idealism.

We comfort ourselves that right reason will prevail, that our heritage will survive. I close by summoning two injunctions. The first, the final sentence of a letter from George Washington, again to a Hebrew congregation, in Newport, Rhode Island. "May the father of all mercies," he wrote, "scatter light, and not darkness, in our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in His own due time and way everlastingly happy."

Two hundred years after Washington wrote these words, a succeeding American president, Ronald Reagan, closed his second inaugural address by asking that we recall "the American sound." It is, he said,—that sound—"hopeful, big-hearted, idealistic; daring, decent, and fair. We sing it still," he said. "We raise our voices to the God who is the author of this most tender music."

We hear that sound, and call back to say that the attritions notwithstanding, our heritage is there. To the end of its preservation, with reverence and gratitude, we dedicate ourselves. **NR**

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Incitement to Violence

Do the Palestinians Live up to Their Oslo Commitments?

In the so-called "Oslo Agreement", often called the "peace process", Israel undertook unilaterally to make valuable concessions to the Palestinians, concessions that would eventually enable them to form an autonomous entity and to be masters of their own destiny. Never in the recorded history of mankind has any state made such concessions to one of its resident minorities. Israel requested and was solemnly promised very little in return—primarily that the Palestinians would abstain from violence and from incitement to violence.

What are the facts?

The reality, regrettably, has not at all lived up to the agreement and to the promises made. While Arafat and other Palestinian leaders proclaim their peaceful intentions in English before Western audiences, they are brutally frank when they address their own people in Arabic and away from Western newspeople and television cameras. There is constant incitement to violence and frank declaration of the ultimate goal—firmly embedded in the never rescinded PLO Covenant—namely the destruction of the State of Israel and its replacement by "Palestine," an Arab state.

The statements that follow were made by Palestinian leaders not too long ago. They are representative of similar ones made before and since.

> "Peace will not come...until the Palestinians and the Arab nations commit themselves to full acceptance of Israel and are willing to live with it in peace."

PA Chairman Yasser Arafat ***(Palestinian Television, August 9, 1997):*** *"We must confront them, we must confront them. We must confront them in every sense of the word."*

Yasser Arafat ***(Palestinian Television, August 6, 1997):*** *"...let us commit ourselves before Allah and the Palestinian people that we shall lead the coming battle as we have led previous battles. An oath is an oath and a promise is a promise. The whole world stands by us, while they are alone. They are afraid, but we are not. We cling to the oath and the promise. The Palestinian people is faithful to its oath, the one which we swore upon the first day when the initial shot was fired and the first of our martyrs fell...We are marching together with the blessing of Allah, my brothers, we are marching together to Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Jerusalem."*

Kamel Hamid, head of Fatah (a faction of the PLO) ***(At a Rally, August 10, 1997):*** *"...all means are legitimate to uproot the despicable occupation."*

Sheikh Hamed Bitawi, chairman of the Palestine Religious Scholars Association ***(July 27, 1997):*** *"That which befell the infidel nations will also occur to the State of Israel. We are certain that Allah will destroy the State of Israel either through natural disasters, such as an earthquake, or at the hands of the Moslems, or both."*

PA Mufti Ikrama Sabri ***(In a sermon at Al-Aksa Mosque, July 11, 1997):*** *"Oh Allah, destroy America for she is ruled by Zionist Jews...Allah shall take revenge on behalf of his prophet against the colonialist settlers who are sons of monkeys and pigs..."*

PA Minister for Jerusalem Affairs Feisal Husseini ***(May 18, 1997):*** *"Israel is attempting to obstruct peace...The only option remaining for us will be an alternative option...war."*

Yasser Arafat ***(Addressing a crowd in Tulkarem, April 28, 1997):*** *"I now see the walls of Jerusalem, the mosques of Jerusalem, the churches of Jerusalem. My brothers! With blood and with spirit we will redeem you, Palestine!"*

Nabil Ramlawi ***(At a session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, Reported March 17, 1997):*** *"Israeli authorities...infected by injection 300 Palestinian children*

All of these actual verbatim quotations are only a minute fraction of the inflammatory statements with which Palestinian leaders whip up their followers to a frenzy of hatred and violence against Israel. It is totally against the letter and the spirit of the Oslo accord. But it is in line with all the other acts of defiance and non-compliance on the part of the Palestinians. For example, and most egregiously perhaps, that famous Covenant that unequivocally calls for the destruction of Israel has never been rescinded. Instead of combating terrorist activity, the Palestinian Authority (P.A.) continues to release well-known members of terrorist groups. Another blatant violation is the size and the weaponry of the so-called P.A. police force, which was fixed by Oslo at a maximum of 24,000, but which is now estimated at over 50,000 members, many of them former terrorists and equipped with smuggled advanced military weapons. It is essentially an army in waiting. How do people expect Israel to bring further "sacrifices for peace" to appease these fanatics and why, in the face of daily evidence of Palestinian intransigence and murderous hatred, should Israel even consider turning over vital strategic assets to those who are openly committed to its destruction? Peace will not come to this part of the world until the Palestinians and the Arab nations commit themselves to full acceptance of Israel and are willing to live with it in peace. And that day seems to be a long way off.

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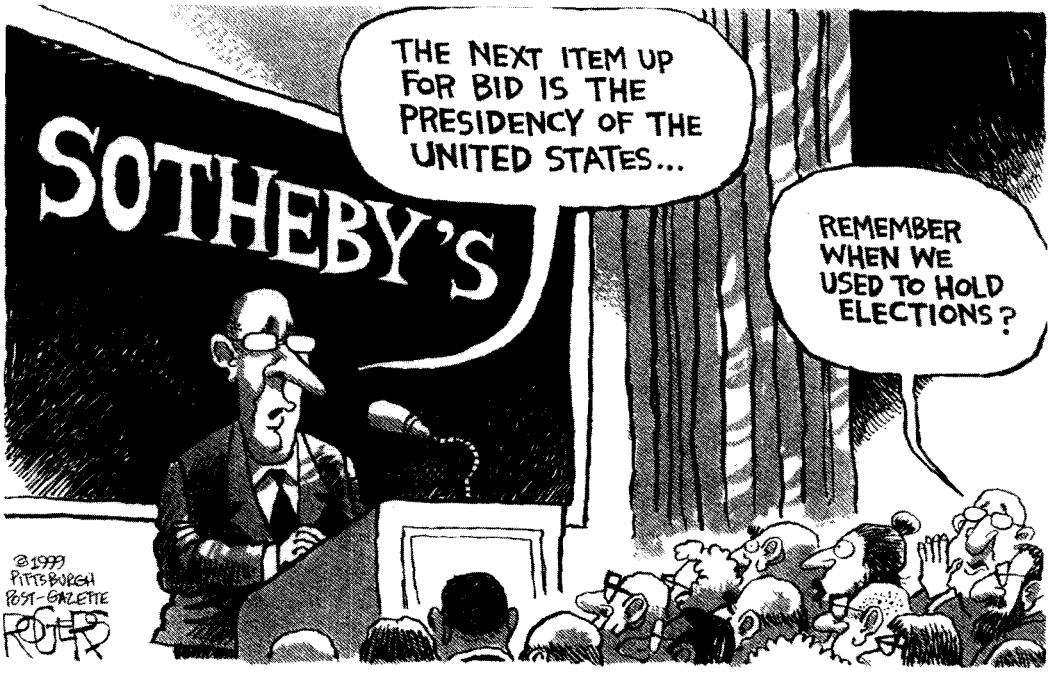
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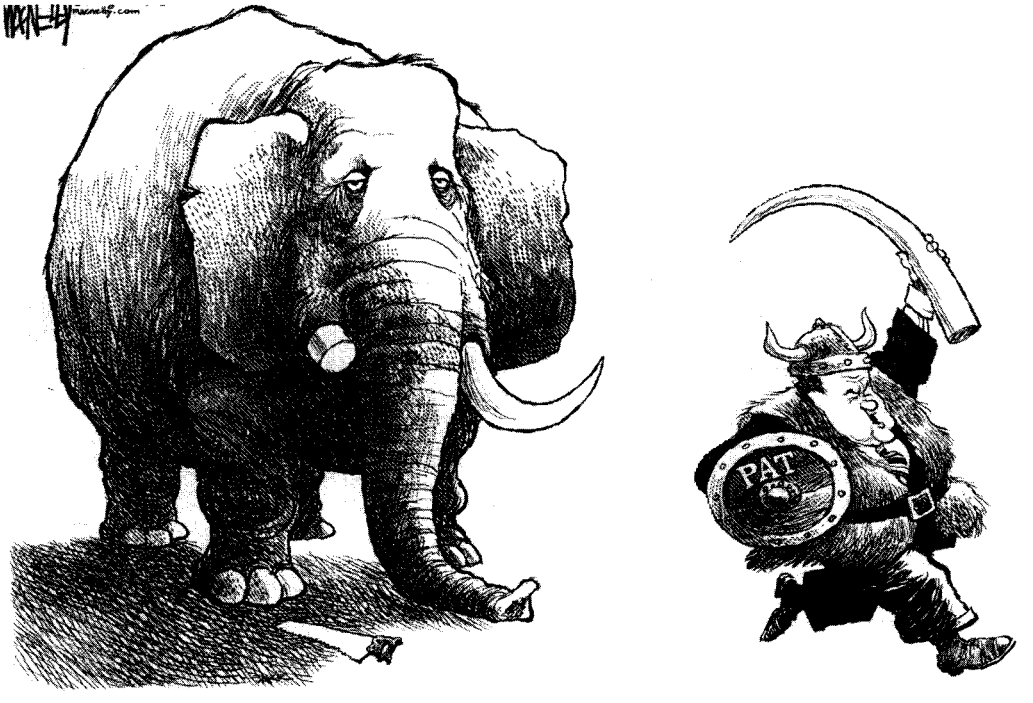

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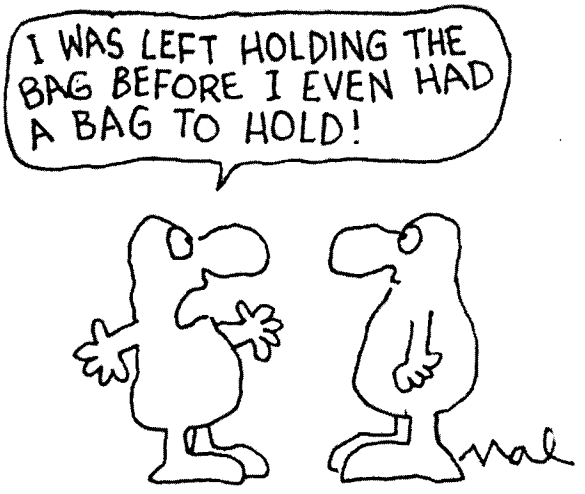
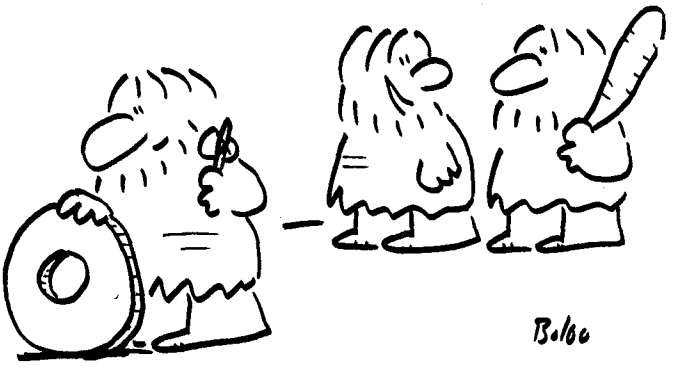
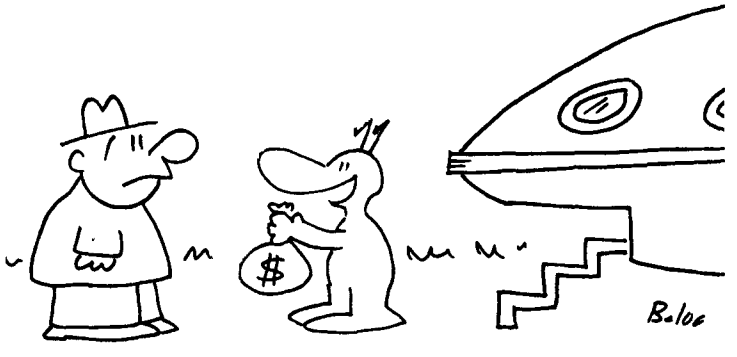




"Let's have some fun—let's invent the pothole."



"Take me to your leader—I have a nice campaign contribution."

"My lawyer shredded my homework."

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MEMORANDUM

TO: VPOTUS
FROM: Naomi Wolf & Media Team
RE: Tonight's Town Hall Meeting

Here is what our research suggests.

Remember to thank the questioner for his or her question. They want you to like them, Mr. Vice President. Our research into the minds and habits of the middle class suggests that they have self-esteem issues—and they'd really appreciate knowing that someone of your stature appreciates the way someone of their stature asked a question from an open mike.

Remember that the people asking the questions are by and large from the New Hampshire area. This means they're not quite as, oh, "up to speed," shall we say, as the folks you're used to interacting with.

This means that you're going to have to try double hard to engage them. If some working American from New Hampshire says, "Hello, Mr. Vice President, I'm a garbage collector," what he (or she!!!) wants to hear is not a cold recitation of your waste-management policy, but instead a warm and fatherly, "Oh my! Why, that's a very important job!"

If your questioner is particularly tall, a hearty "My, my! LOOK how tall and strong you are!" would be a welcome icebreaker. (NB: DOES NOT apply to those New Hampshire residents who appear overweight.)

Finally, compliment certain questioners on their ability to raise a family. *Raising a family is a difficult, difficult, very important job.* It's twice as hard when the government doesn't get in there and lend a hand. Without your help, most of them would fail miserably at it. Bear this in mind.

And smile!!!!!!!!!!

Mr. Vice President, we know you'll do just terrifically great! And we know that if you follow these few steps, you'll appear warmer, more accessible, and more human to the unsophisticated—but nonetheless marvelously earthy and real—American voter.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bill Bradley
FROM: Media Team
RE: Town Hall Meeting

Some last-minute thoughts before the event.

1. We've noticed the past few weeks that you've allowed some animated facial expressions to appear on your upper forehead—some crinkly laugh lines, an eyebrow ridge, etc. You really should try to eliminate these from your otherwise placid delivery.

2. Remember: You do not want to win! You do not care if you lose! You do not want the job! Chant these things to yourself before, during, and after the debate.

3. Studies show (cf. "The Effect of National Public Radio on the Sleep Deprived" [Marshall: 1997] and "Mind-Release, Relaxation, and 'Zoning' via Charlie Rose" [Dennis: 1996]) that your low, murmuring voice produces a rush of anti-endorphins to the brain, lulling your listeners into a dream-like state of semi-consciousness. Try to remember to keep all answers to at least seven minutes, and to modulate your voice tone to mid-bass-range monotone.

4. Do not use the eyes to express emotion.

5. It is important to minimize the differences between yourself and the Vice President. Differences—or conflicts—will interfere with the calm delivery of your vocal intonation, and may lead to such disquieting effects as "excitement." This effect, while momentarily effective, will lead to an unpleasant surge in the polls, and all the ugliness that that entails.

6. The staccato noise that the audience sometimes emits sounds like barking, but is, in fact, "laughter." Do not encourage them in this frivolity. Likewise the slapping noise they create by beating their open palms against each other.

7. Remember: Heavy lids mean heavy thoughts. Keep those eyes droopy!

And finally, remember: You are too good for this job! You do not want this job! This job is beneath you! Good Luck!

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

We Lost. Now What?

TERRY TEACHOUT

One Nation, Two Cultures: A Moral Divide, by Gertrude Himmelfarb (Knopf, 192 pp., $23)

THE NINETIES are looking more and more like a stand-up monologue consisting exclusively of good news–bad news jokes. The Soviet Union went bust, but Bill Clinton was elected president; the Dow is up, but morality's down. The front-running presidential candidate is a Republican who first calls himself a conservative (sort of), then gives a speech in front of a roomful of conservative intellectuals in which he makes fun of Bob Bork. Ideologically speaking, the prevailing level of confusion has rarely been higher. Every time I open the paper these days, I think of poor old Mr. Jones, the upper-middle-class gent in the Bob Dylan song, who'd read all of F. Scott Fitzgerald's books and knew something was happening, but didn't know what it was.

So just what is happening? The simple answer—simplistic, really—comes from Rich Karlgaard, the publisher of *Forbes*, who was recently quoted as saying, "The right won the economic argument, and the left won the cultural argument." Alas, conservatives who don't get culture (and their name is legion) don't get Karlgaard's point, while those who do get culture but think it ceased to exist in 1960 (or 1860) have been reduced by postmodernity to the kind of frenzied spluttering Bugs Bunny used to inspire in Daffy Duck. As for the libertarians for whom Karlgaard speaks, they are the remittance men of Western culture, living happily off the income from a dwindling trust fund whose capital they do nothing to replenish or protect.

Gertrude Himmelfarb by Roman Genn

The not-so-simple answer comes from Gertrude Himmelfarb, America's preeminent Victorianist, who in recent years has been writing with increasing frequency about the way we live now, and whose latest book is a concise, clear-eyed look at the culture war and what it really means. Once or twice in a generation—if that often—a very wise person writes a very pithy book that compresses everything that needs to be said about a given topic into the briefest of compasses. *The Road to Serfdom*, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, *The Abolition of Man*: Books like these are made to be given to puzzled friends. They change minds, and lives. *One Nation, Two Cultures* is such a book.

The manifold virtues of Himmelfarb's book start with its title, in which she answers Mr. Jones's question with four well-chosen words. Yes, she says, there has been a culture war, "a revolution in the manners, morals, and mores of society," and the Left has won it:

> What was, only a few decades ago, a subculture or counterculture in American society has been assimilated into the dominant culture. . . . Most [Americans] lead lives that, in most respects, most of the time, conform to traditional ideals of morality and propriety. But they do so with no firm confidence in the principles underlying their behavior. . . . Even when they complain about the "moral decline" of the country (which they continue to do, in very large numbers), they offer little resistance to the manifestations of that decline. They believe in God, but they believe even more in the autonomy of the individual. They confess that they find it difficult to judge what is moral or immoral even for themselves, still more for others.

But at the same time, the losing side, far from rolling over and playing dead, has launched a resistance movement:

> There is, however, another culture (or set of loosely allied subcultures) that coexists somewhat uneasily with the dominant culture. This might be called the "dissident culture"—the culture not of the three-quarters of the public who redefine family to include "significant others," but of the one-quarter who abide by the traditional definition; not of the 55–60 percent who think that premarital sex is acceptable, but of the 40–45 percent who think it is not. . . . They do not think of sexual morality as a "personal matter" that can be "boxed off," as is now said, from the rest of life. Nor do they think of religion as a "private affair" that should not encroach upon the "public square." Nor are they apt to engage in such circumlocutions as "Who am I to say . . . ?" or "Personally . . . but . . . "

It is this tension between dominant and dissident cultures, Himmelfarb argues, that explains "the peculiar, almost schizoid nature of our present condition: the evidence of moral disarray on the one hand and of a religious-cum-moral revival on the other." But the fact that the dissident culture is neither monolithic nor coercive but demo-

Mr. Teachout, the music critic of *Commentary*, is writing *H. L. Mencken: A Life*.

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cratic—"It is entirely voluntary, its members being free to move in or out at will"—allows those who belong to it, however alienated they may be from the radical nonjudgmentalism of the dominant culture, nonetheless to remain "loyal to America as a country, a nation, and a polity," and thus open to the responsible political compromises and accommodations that are made possible by true tolerance, as opposed to the Tolerance Lite of the hard cultural Left.

The value of *One Nation, Two Cultures* lies less in the originality of its analysis—little of what the author has to say will come as a total surprise to those familiar with such influential books as Bork's *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* or Myron Magnet's *The Dream and the Nightmare*—than in the concentration and clarity of its presentation. But Himmelfarb's emphasis on the necessity for loyalty to the idea of an American polity is decidedly her own, and recalls the stern stance she took in response to "The End of Democracy?," the now-notorious *First Things* symposium in which several participants suggested that a time might be coming when "conscientious citizens [could] no longer give moral assent to the existing regime." Such language, she contends, is dangerously hyperbolic, just as it is irresponsible for alienated conservatives to abandon the public square altogether, much less to call into question "the legitimacy of either the law or the 'regime.'"

■

The two cultures, notes Himmelfarb, remain one nation, split but not sundered.

■

Original, too, is the fact that unlike so many aging cons and neocons, she views the current crisis with the guarded optimism of a historian accustomed to taking long views. Despite the myriad horrors wrought in the name of the '60s, she notes, neither dominant nor dissident culture has resorted to widespread repression or violence. The two cultures remain one nation, split but not sundered; Bill Bennett's Index of Leading Cultural Indicators is showing modest signs of improvement, and it is now possible to broach in politically mixed company ideas that once would have gotten you tossed out of the better sort of cocktail party. For Himmelfarb, the glass is exactly half full:

> Nor do the old labels, pessimist and optimist, apply to those who are neither apocalyptic nor utopian, who do not think of themselves as either at the nadir of Western civilization or at the zenith of a brave new world, and who do not aspire to solve all problems but only to mitigate some of them.

So temperate a tone is unlikely to appeal to the angry alarmists who tend to dominate the cultural conversation on the right. Yet I confess to finding it sympathetic, not least because my own view of such matters has become unexpectedly benign, if not precisely sanguine. To be sure, I still feel deeply alienated from innumerable aspects of contemporary American culture, sometimes to the point of actual despair. But despair, as John Lukacs once remarked, almost always involves a large, sinful dose of self-indulgence—especially given the fact that amid all the craziness, there is no shortage of reasons for hope.

It's worth noting, for instance, that Rich Karlgaard's declaration of left-wing cultural triumph came deep within an admiring *Vanity Fair* profile of such "conservative babes" as Wendy Shalit, Danielle Crittenden, Kanchan Limaye, and Amity Shlaes, none of whom is exactly hoisting the white flag. Gen-Xers continue to emit inchoate but nonetheless unmistakable signs of dissatisfaction with the cultural orthodoxies of the baby boomers; the Internet, for all its atomizing effects on American life, also offers members of the dissident culture a way to bypass the elite media and create virtual communities of their own. You can even hear new tonal music in the concert halls nowadays.

Small victories? Perhaps. But if history has anything to teach us, it is that there can be no such thing as an earthly paradise, and that those who shed the most blood in this bloodiest of centuries did so in the hopes of making everything right, right now. "If a counterrevolution is unlikely," Gertrude Himmelfarb writes toward the end of this invaluable little book, "a more modest reformation is not." I can think of worse things. **NR**

Unbelievable

NORAH VINCENT

Sleeping with Extra-Terrestrials: The Rise of Irrationalism and Perils of Piety, by Wendy Kaminer (Pantheon, 272 pp., $24)

WENDY KAMINER belongs to that snarky club of embattled liberal intellectuals perhaps best represented by left-wing journalist Christopher Hitchens. Aside from making a name for himself as a rapier-tongued Puck on the Sunday talk-show circuit, he has made a cottage industry out of bashing, of all people, Mother Teresa. In recent years Hitchens has written a book, *The Missionary Position*, and a documentary, *Hell's Angel*, both of which maintained that the saintly nun from Calcutta was a venal PR machine for the Pope and the Catholic Church. In *Sleeping with Extra-Terrestrials*, Kaminer, in her own more socially acceptable, less bibulous way, is likewise trying to save us from "the perils of piety"—the pestilence of organized religion and its encroachment on public life. Should we be surprised that Katha Pollitt, atheist-in-chief at *The Nation* and author of a book called *Reasonable Creatures*, has given Kaminer's book a gushing blurb? After all, these rearguard rationalists have to stick together, floating perilously as they are on a shrinking iceberg of sense in a sea of credulity.

Faith and belief are easy targets for enlightened ridicule. After all, what could be a flimsier straw man than a phenomenon that has never claimed to be anything but irrational? Why does Kaminer, a contributing editor at *The Atlantic Monthly*, a widely published social critic, and a fellow at Radcliffe College who clearly prides herself on her acumen, impartiality, and reasoned prose, feel the need to write a book that proves irrationality is irrational? Doesn't the truth of this statement count as a priori knowledge, if anything does? We need only consult the dictionary to learn what Wendy Kaminer takes nearly 300

Miss Vincent is writing a biography of Hamlet.

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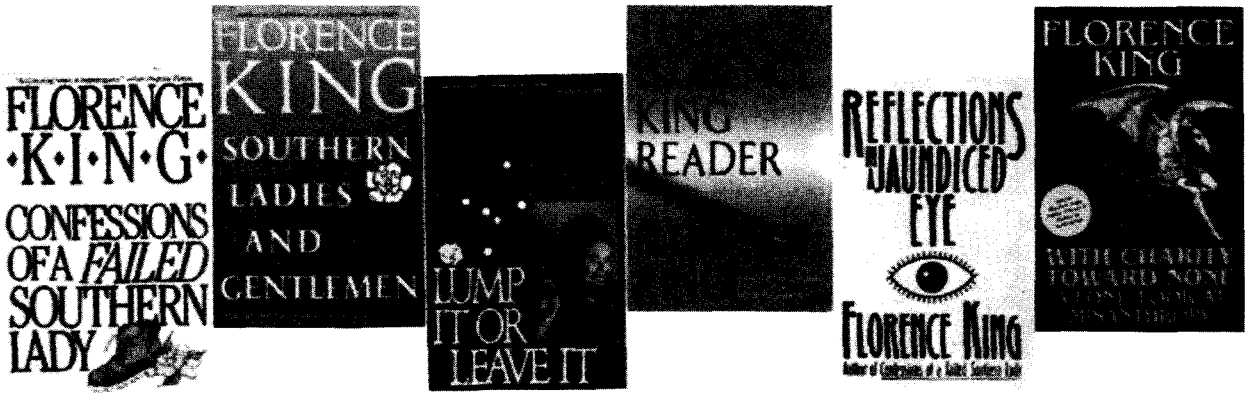

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pages to tell us. But it is always the people who think irrationality should wither in the pure light of reason who feel the need to write long books that kill it dead on every page, only to see it rise up again stronger than ever on the next.

Sleeping with Extra-Terrestrials is a jeremiad of the most dispassionate kind—an appeal to the sensible among us, a warning that on the eve of this farcical third millennium, our increasingly superstitious, churchy age is in danger of

■

Perhaps what is most irritating about Wendy Kaminer's book is the sheer unbridled arrogance with which she approaches all things metaphysical.

■

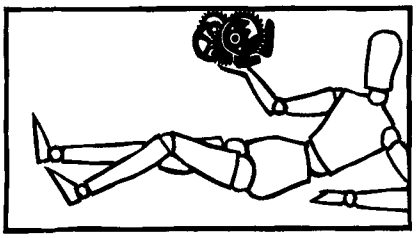
becoming another Salem, Massachusetts, or, worse, another Dayton, Tennessee. Kaminer clearly fancies herself a latter-day H. L. Mencken doing battle with the demons of dogmatism and political reaction that threaten our secular freedoms. She is here to skepticize us out of our silly fascination with angels, aliens, miracles, near-death experiences, junk science, creationism, a Gorgonzola moon, and (for Kaminer, a delusion of the same order) the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

Kaminer makes no effort to understand the reasons for the persistence of such beliefs in a rational, skeptical age. She knows only that she has a jaundiced liberal's saucy eye to cast on every subject, from school vouchers (they'll only religify education by putting more kids in the dreaded Catholic schools) to the impeachment of President Clinton, which she likens to Greek tragedy when she calls it "Clinton's misfortune (or his self-determined fate)." Kaminer presents the Lewinsky affair as a matter of the right to privacy trumping the right-wing preoccupation with sexual morality. The word "perjury" is absent from her analysis.

The point of bringing up Clinton is to address the second and more heartfelt part of the book's subtitle—the "perils of piety." According to Kaminer, the impeachment of the president, like the advent of public-school vouchers, showed just how dangerous it is to blur the line between church and state. Clinton's ordeal proves only one thing to Kaminer: When moralists control the government, we'll all be on trial for our sex lives. Beware of Republicans in power! Imagine what it will be like. Lying under oath will be a punishable offense, and Chinese spies will have to find a room at the Washington Hilton.

Much of what Kaminer purports to cover in this book—the weird and whirling world of self-help—she has already critiqued roundly in her previous book, *I'm Dysfunctional, You're Dysfunctional: The Recovery Movement and Other Self-Help Fashions*. Her real agenda here is to ridicule Catholicism and, to some extent, the political agenda of the Christian Right. Of course she never says outright that she's targeting papists and other superstitious dupes, preferring easy targets like New Age spirituality seminars and do-it-yourself therapy manuals, suicidal cults like Heaven's Gate, and saccharine television shows like *Touched by an Angel*—manifestations of irrationalism that no serious person of faith would defend. How hard is it to show that Deepak Chopra's elevator doesn't go to the top floor, or that *The Celestine Prophecy* lacks the compelling authority of a rational proof?

But for all the time she spends maligning half-baked pop gurus and other lightweight spiritual charlatans, comments like the following announce her real thesis: "The Reverend Sun Myung Moon is always fair game, but not the pope."



Anyone familiar with the recent uproar over the dung-flung, pornographized painting of the Virgin Mary that is now being proudly exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum of Art would argue that, on the contrary, Catholicism is most definitely fair game these days. This was the case long before Hitchens declared war on the Missionaries of Charity, and it has been especially true in the avant-garde art world. Remember NEA-funded sculptor Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*—a crucifix submerged in a jar of urine—which by a not-so-strange coincidence is now being re-exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art? One wonders how arty liberals would have reacted if someone had exhibited a dung-encrusted picture of two gay men having sex. Then, clinically speaking at least, the dung would have made some sense.

And what about what's happening in the cinema of late? *Stigmata*, which stars Gabriel Byrne, Jonathan Pryce, and Patricia Arquette, is typical history-by-Hollywood fare, wherein an atheist raver-chick (Arquette) receives the wounds of Christ. She becomes possessed by someone who sounds like the straight, Franciscan version of Harvey Fierstein, and begins channeling what Vatican insiders know to be the lost gospel of Jesus Christ, written by Jesus himself. This is the kind of heresy that used to result in an auto-da-fé; now it sells theater tickets. The forthcoming *Dogma*, which stars Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Alanis Morissette, Salma Hayek, and Chris Rock, has likewise been dubbed unabashedly "blasphemous" by more than one critic. The film, which like *Stigmata* rewrites history with a politically correct pen (making Jesus black and God a woman), pays obligatory homage to *Roe v. Wade* by showing the last remaining descendant of Mary and Joseph working in an abortion clinic. Despite the Catholic League's vociferous protests, *Dogma* is enjoying more than a little positive pre-release hype.

Kaminer's one sensible pronouncement in *Sleeping with Extra-Terrestrials*—though only tenuously linked to her thesis—is that the U.S. government should end its war on drugs. Again, this is Kaminer writing an op-ed on whatever catches her fancy, framed in the context of her pet peeve, irrationalism. Kaminer writes: "The irrationality of the drug war is matched only by its popularity with politicians, who refuse to consider facts like these: alcohol is associated with much more violent crime than any illegal drug." This stubborn refusal to consider the "facts" is the root of all evil in Kaminer's world.

Perhaps what is most irritating about

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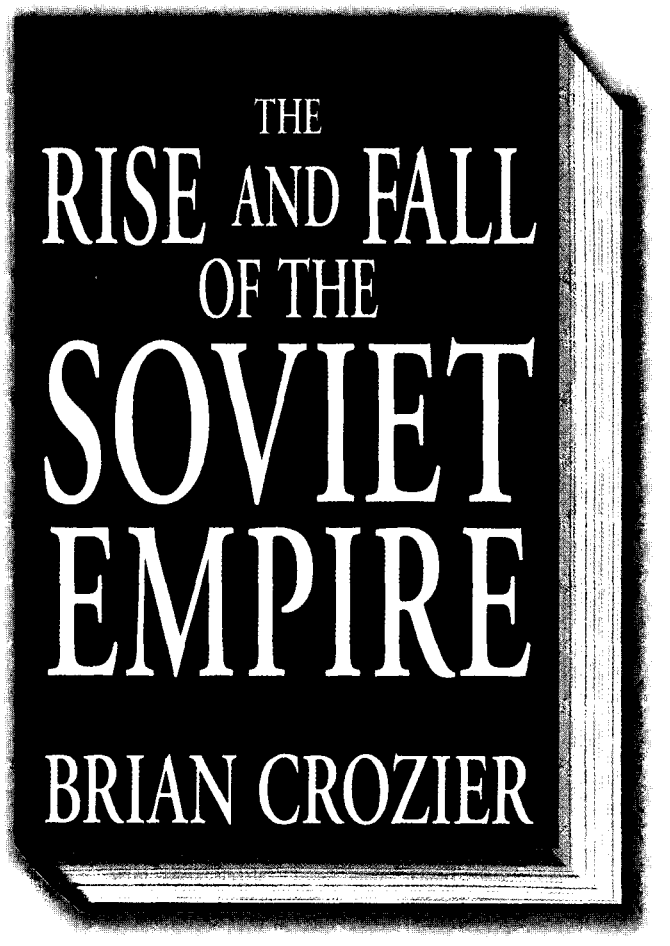

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Kaminer's book is the tone-deaf arrogance with which she approaches all things metaphysical. *Sleeping with Extra-Terrestrials* is peppered with sneering asides like "the notion of God is irrelevant to me," or "a sensible person might wonder . . . " Kaminer laments our "utter failure to criticize, much less satirize, America's romance with God." But she displays a similar lack of self-knowledge, and, like so many modern rationalists, she has no sense of humor. Kaminer fails to realize that she has fallen into the perennial atheist's trap: In her godless world, she has made herself God. She too in her own way is a victim of faith: not in an unseen Creator but in the supremacy of her own mind, the superiority of her skeptical convictions, and the limitless powers of rationality. But even Socrates, the patron saint of skeptics like Ms. Kaminer, proclaimed that he knew nothing; the first Western rationalist knew that reason has its limits, and that the arrogant assurance of sophists is a form of stupidity. **NR**

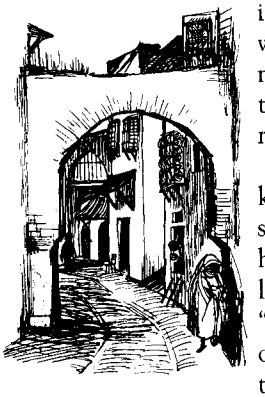
An Affair to Remember

NOEMIE EMERY

An Affair of State: The Investigation, Impeachment, and Trial of President Clinton, by Richard A. Posner (Harvard, 276 pp., $24.95)

UNLIKE the unholy mess it dissects and untangles, *An Affair of State* is a cool little gemstone of logic and reason, a rational antidote to partisan excess, and a short, elegant guide for the perplexed. Among the first of what will be many books to look back at the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, it should be the touchstone against which all others are measured, having no evident bias except toward clarity. Richard Posner, a federal appellate-court judge and lecturer at the University of Chicago law school, does not seem to like most of the people described in this book, much less to share their agendas. One cannot deduce here which party he backs, whom he voted for in recent elections, or whose positions he tends to endorse. This is the strength of his book, and its claim to authority.

Posner clarifies much that needed clarification. The precipitating event of the scandal was Clinton's alleged harassment of Paula Jones (a public matter), which resulted in the unearthing of his dalliance with Monica Lewinsky (a private affair), the attempt to conceal which (to avoid criminal sanctions) led to the crimes of perjury and obstruction of justice that brought on the impeachment and trial. The Jones case itself was a legitimate lawsuit that reached the heights it did largely because of partisan interests: Jones could not have paid for the kind of lawyers able to battle a president, had Clinton's conservative enemies not come forth to help. The Supreme Court was wrong to have let the case go on while Clinton was president, but Posner sees little wrong with the case as it developed. The Jones team was within its rights to contact Starr, as many criminal prosecutions begin with tips given by interested parties. And Starr had no choice but to pursue the issues raised in the Tripp matter, as the suspected crime there was obstruction of justice: Vernon Jordan was suspected of buying off people who could give Clinton trouble, offering them, for example, cushy jobs in New York.



The Jones suit was thus a valid legal case carried on largely for political reasons. The scandal involved a public lie about a private matter, to avert accountability in a legal (and public) proceeding, about a sin that was basically private in nature—not Clinton's lust for power, but his lust, period.

This set of facts gave rise to two quite different versions of events, which duked it out in a 14-month tangle. Each side inflicted significant damage but failed to land a knockout blow. The resulting confusion kept the public from forming strong feelings either way. It now seems likely that what was read as backing for Clinton was really indifference, or perhaps indecision. Yawns greeted the impeachment vote, the trial, and Clinton's acquittal. Yawns might have followed, had he been forced out.

Posner locates two smaller debates within the large dispute: The first was between "rigorists," who wanted Clinton removed so as to maintain the country's moral standards, and "pragmatists," who found Clinton disgusting, but not disgusting enough to justify a long, sordid trial. A second debate went on among activists, who fit the events into their private fixations. Social conservatives saw Clinton as the culminating figure in a long moral slide that had gone on since the '60s. "Progressives," thinking most conservatives fascists by nature, saw in the impeachment drive against a cultural liberal a second coming of the KKK. Also treated here, though perhaps not receiving as much attention as it deserves, is the extent to which this affair followed logically from the 1991 Thomas–Hill hearings, which made of sexual harassment a viable issue, made sex charges a weapon to use against "enemies," and bred in conservatives a justified lust for revenge.

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Posner calls the Senate trial a 'travesty,' a farce performed before jurors who had clearly made up their minds.

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On the trial itself, Posner keeps his cool, refusing to state the conclusions to which his assessments appear to be leading. "It is clear," he states, "that President Clinton obstructed justice, in violation of federal criminal law, by perjuring himself repeatedly in his deposition in the Jones case, in his testimony before the grand jury, and in his responses to the House Judiciary Committee"; by witness-tampering with Lewinsky, and perhaps with others; and by suborning perjury in Lewinsky's sworn deposition. These crimes, Posner says, would have been prosecuted *more* severely had Clinton been a private citizen, and the

Noemie Emery is writing a book on political dynasties.

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prison term for such offenses would probably be between 30 and 37 months.

But, he says, "the fact that obstructing justice is felonious is relevant but not determinative . . . neither so grave a crime as to make it imperative that the perpetrator be removed from office, nor so trivial" as to make removal excessive. (He also says that Richard Nixon might have been safely allowed to keep office, once his aides had been fired and the conspiracies exposed.) Correctly, he calls the Senate trial a "travesty," a truncated farce performed before jurors who had clearly made up their minds, and had no interest in listening to evidence. But he thinks the fault is less with this Senate than with the Senate as a modern institution: too large, too poll-driven, and too partisan to render fair judgment in all but the most obvious cases.

Posner lavishes dispraise on every side. He faults social conservatives as unduly gloomy, and insists that Clinton's sins neither presage nor reflect a general breakdown of morals. He's right to point out that private behavior among Americans did not become worse during the presidencies of Harding and Nixon; and that most indices reflecting social dysfunction—divorce, crime, abortion—rose in the administrations of moral men like Ford, Carter, and Reagan, and have turned around under Clinton.

But when he discusses liberals, his dispassion slips, and true feeling enters his arguments. He cites Clinton's lawyers as misleading and overly technical. He cites congressional Democrats as obstructionist demagogues who cheerfully argued conflicting positions and tacitly endorsed an alliance with the likes of Larry Flynt. He cites the White House's "slander machine"—Hillary Clinton, Sidney Blumenthal, and James Carville—for spreading malicious slurs about "enemies." And he cites Clinton's academic defenders—Sean Wilentz, Ronald Dworkin, and Arthur Schlesinger Jr.—for using the language of morals to mislead the public, to defend a liar and felon who happened to be of their party.

And what of Bill Clinton, the source of all this chaos? He is a shameless, endemic, and compulsive liar; along with Nixon, the most "abnormal" of our

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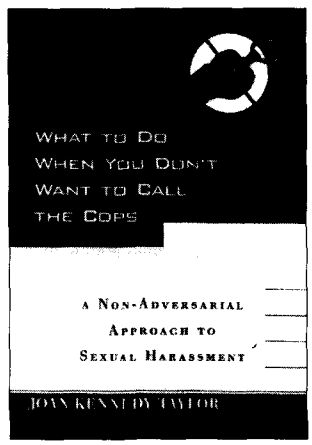

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presidents; unfit morally (if not in strict legal terms) to hold his high office; incapable of shame, of conscience, or of "moral growth." When he was caught, Posner says, "it was apparent that . . . his reaction . . . was anger, not shame, that he would continue to blame everyone but himself . . . and that he would continue to lie to the extent that physical evidence would not contradict him."

Clinton is said to believe that history will vindicate him as the hero he thinks he is, hounded unfairly by Puritan zealots, jealous of his unparalleled greatness as president. Don't hold your breath, Bill. **NR**

Born on the 4th of July

MICHAEL POTEMRA

Storm Over the Constitution, by Harry V. Jaffa (Lexington, 167 pp., $22.95)

HARRY JAFFA'S latest book is the work of a man clearly in love with the American idea. In the preface to this slim but fascinating volume, Larry P. Arnn summarizes Jaffa's central insight this way: "We believe that American conservatism has something special to conserve. That something is formed around the Declaration of Independence."

The book more than justifies the claim that the Declaration is central to an understanding of American values in general, and of American conservatism in particular. It consists of Jaffa's controversial essays—aimed chiefly at Judge Robert Bork—on how, specifically, the values of the Declaration are to be respected in the process of jurisprudence. Are the values expressed in the Declaration to be incorporated into the Constitution and treated as law? Or are they simply too vague, reflecting personal opinions that may be true but are unenforceable in the courts?

This issue has generated a great deal of debate, and more than a little anger. If you asked the debaters, they would probably say that the value of Jaffa's book—indeed of his entire body of work—rests entirely on which side is right. This reviewer sides with Jaffa, chiefly on the grounds that 1) the Founding Fathers lived in a culture in which the principles of the Declaration were intellectually central, and 2) it is therefore reasonable to take these principles into account when trying to establish the Founders' original intent. But leaving that question aside, it remains true that *Storm Over the Constitution* lays out an intellectual banquet. It is an important achievement, even aside from the legal point at issue.

One learns here, for example, in a very succinct way, about the specific genius of the Constitution, its combination of democracy and restraint, of majority rule and minority rights. Jaffa quotes James Madison as saying that an elected Congress should be allowed to do only those things "that could be *rightfully* done by the unanimous concurrence of the members." This distinction goes to the heart of America's moral order. If a course of action is morally wrong, the fact that 50 percent plus one of voters, or even 100 percent of voters, favor it does not make the action right; it merely makes the action possible.

Madison was saying that right can never reside purely in might. The constitutional safeguards the Founders wrote into their document were intended to limit the power, in the nascent democracy, of might to oppress right. But this mechanism could not be self-enforcing; as its success depended largely on a moral understanding of right, a high level of virtue among the citizenry was essential to its functioning. Jaffa believes that this virtue can best be assured by a cultivation—in the process of jurisprudence—of respect for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. While Jaffa's critics disagree with him on the question of whether these principles of natural morality should be treated as enforceable law, they would agree with him that these principles are nonetheless an essential underpinning of civic order.

Jaffa also quotes Thomas Jefferson as calling the Declaration of Independence "an expression of the American mind." Exactly correct. No matter whether the Declaration is a binding expression of our country's law, it is without doubt the highest expression of its mind. Americans have fought willingly for the freedom of individuals, and for their human rights, not because an act of Congress or a Supreme Court decision commanded them to do so, but because our national character is receptive to certain truths about the human person, truths enunciated by reason as well as revelation.

One of the best passages of the book is the author's discussion of this philosophical basis of human rights. In a section he refers to as "Aristotle for lawyers," but which could just as well be called "Aristotle for laymen," Jaffa lays out the specific distinctiveness of humanity—what gives us rights that other animals lack. Human beings, he says, are different because their capacities are not limited to the physical; they can transcend the physical through the process of reason. When Aristotle defines man as a rational animal, he is addressing not merely what makes human beings different from lower animals, but what unites human beings in the realm of a sacred common value.

No matter whether the Declaration is a binding expression of our country's law, it is without doubt the highest expression of its mind.

Jaffa makes a strong case, but it would be even stronger if not for the book's conspicuous fault—the author's tendency to engage in too many personal animadversions against his critics. Many readers will find these comments entertaining, but others will find them distracting. To Jaffa's credit, however, in the final 40 pages of the book he reprints—in their entirety—two important attacks on his position.

Storm Over the Constitution is, again, very much of a piece with Jaffa's career as an exponent of the philosophy of human rights. His most famous book,

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Crisis of the House Divided (1959), analyzes the principles at issue in the Lincoln–Douglas debates. Lincoln believed that slavery was very much a wrong, and it is a sign of Lincoln's greatness that this issue is no longer debated. We, as Americans, know that slavery is wrong. But while we know *that* this is true, Jaffa attempts to understand precisely why it is true.

Jaffa, renowned political philosopher that he is, is perhaps best known to political junkies as the author of the most famous line in Barry Goldwater's 1964 acceptance speech: "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. . . . Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue." While philosophers have raised important objections to this phrasing, as a political call to arms it is almost unparalleled. It strikes a chord deep in the American heart. The existence of America says to the whole world that every human person has rights, and that when these rights are respected—when liberty and justice prosper—the human person flourishes. An important truth, and the lodestar of Harry Jaffa's life. **NR**

In Defense of Pius

JOHN LUKACS

Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII, by John Cornwell (Viking, 430 pp., $29.95)

A BIOGRAPHY of a pope who died more than 40 years ago? No such book would have received any interest, perhaps not even a publisher, in the past. This is not what is happening now—but the reason for this is not any interest in papal or ecclesiastical history. The reason is the unending interest in, and the festering rashes and wounds in many minds about, the Second World War, its crimes and evils, including the Holocaust. And the related interest is not what Pope Pius XII did during the Second World War—it is, rather, what he did not do.

This reviewer had read, written, and

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pondered much about the subject. He must add that many years ago he read and reviewed the twelve (not eleven, as Cornwell reports) extraordinary volumes of Vatican documents about World War II published by the Holy See, which the author of *Hitler's Pope* does not seem to have done. So, at the risk of presumption, here is a summary of my considered view. Eugenio Pacelli, Pope Pius XII, 1939–1958, had the great misfortune of occupying the Holy See during World War II. Caution and piety marked his character from the beginning of his conscious life. But the character of a man is also influenced by his experiences. His experience as nuncio in Munich during the short-lived Soviet period there in 1919 left a strong mark on his mind. He feared Communism; and he loved the Catholic people of Germany. Consequently he was the architect of the 1933 Concordat with Hitler, allowing the elimination of the Catholic Center Party. During his papacy he avoided an outright condemnation of the government of the Third Reich, including its criminal misdeeds. He thought that a pope must stand above the warring sides and powers, maintaining a kind of august neutrality.

This is the worst one may say about Pius XII during the Second World War. At the same time, there is no doubt that he had no sympathy for Hitlerism, and that he intervened, and allowed his nuncios to intervene many times, in the cause of suppressed and persecuted people, including Jews. He could have said—and done—more; he could have acted otherwise. That much is true. But to examine a man for what he did not say or did not do is a difficult task when it comes to the pursuit of truth.

To entitle a thick and documented book *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* is scandalous. Pius was not Hitler's pope; and there remains not much that is secret about his record during the war. Of the two thousand years of the papacy, the years 1939–1945 are the most documented ones, in quantity as well as quality. Cornwell's book is full of mistakes of judgment. There is ample reason to criticize Pius's excessive caution, his mistaken fear of what Hitler could do to German Catholics during the war, his obsession with Communism at the expense of his concern with a National Socialism that was more powerful and more attractive than was Communism at the time, his unwillingness openly to condemn the German persecution and mass murder of Jews

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Pius was not Hitler's pope; and there remains not much that is secret about Pius's record during the war.

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(and of Poles too). But these were excesses of caution, not of sympathy with Hitlerism, which is what John Cornwell on occasion suggests. Mistakes of fact, too, abound in this volume, mostly about events and people. (One, but only one, example: He refers to the ruler of Hungary as "President," and as a Catholic—Nicholas Horthy was not a president but a regent, and he was a Protestant.)

There is more trouble with this book. In addition to—or perhaps underlying—Cornwell's castigation of Pacelli's politics, there is his attack on this Pope's authoritarianism, an argument that Cornwell carries to decades before and to decades beyond Pius's life, to Pius's predecessors and to his successors. To Cornwell, Pius XII was too authoritarian, too monarchical, too powerful. It may be argued that the very opposite was true. Pius XII was not sufficiently confident of his power and of his situation. Had he spoken out clearly during the war, Hitler would have had plenty of trouble—we have evidences of this, from Hitler's own dropped words. Toward the end of his book, Cornwell posits Pope John Paul II as a continuer of papal authoritarianism, someone who has been demolishing most of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Such an argument not only fails to belong within the confines of this book, it is also quite wrong. Both in character and in action, John Paul II and Pius XII are very different men.

Mr. Lukacs is the author, most recently, of *A Thread of Years* and *Five Days in London, May 1940.*

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The English Catholic writer E. I. Watkin once wrote that the faith and Christ's church are the pure gold; the men who represent them in this world are the alloy; but gold without alloy is unusable. There were and are no popes who have been entirely free of human failings—what matters is the character of such failings, as well as their consequences. Two recent, and very good, portraits of Pius XII exist in the great (Anglican) church historian Owen Chadwick's *Britain and the Vatican During the Second World War* (1986) and Eamon Duffy's *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (1997). They are very different from Cornwell's biography, of which sensational excerpts were first printed in the semi-pornographic magazine *Vanity Fair*—another error of judgment that this author should have avoided. *Hitler's Pope*, alas, is also a selection of the History Book Club. History clubbed, indeed. **NR**

■ **MUSIC** ■

Yankee Doodle Discs

JAY NORDLINGER

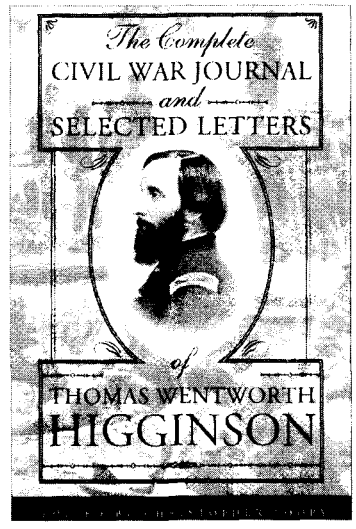
THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC has released another of its "special editions," this one a boxed set of ten compact discs devoted to American music. It is entitled, plainly enough, *An American Celebration*, and it includes 49 works by 39 composers, interpreted by 21 conductors. It is not only a survey of one nation's orchestral music, but a record of the life of an orchestra, and a treasury of some of the century's greatest conductors. It also comes with two fat booklets, stuffed with essays, biographies, and interviews, along with photos so unfamiliar and heartwarming that they alone are almost worth the price ($185) of the set.

All in all, one cannot imagine a finer "salute" (as the Philharmonic also calls it) to American music, or at least to American orchestral music. Sedgwick Clark, producer of the set, has acquitted himself with his usual excellence. But the key and barely utterable question is: Does American music deserve it?

We have now set off a powder keg. In music, as in other areas of life, there is affirmative action—in the case of music, most often national affirmative action. Americans, with their traditional insecurity vis-à-vis Europe, are worse than others in this regard. They tend nervously to favor their own; or rather, they feel an obligation to perform and champion those of their countrymen who happen to compose. This is accepted simply as a fact of life, and an unquestionable good. No one has ever objected when a conductor (it is usually a conductor, rather than a singer or instrumentalist) says, "I pledge to search out and advocate American music."

Thus, when Leonard Slatkin was appointed music director of the National Symphony Orchestra several years ago, it was very heavily emphasized that he was an American conductor who went out of his way—way out of it—to showcase American music. That this was a desirable practice and impulse—particularly for an orchestra that bills itself as "National"—went, of course, entirely unquestioned. The merits of the music (or, for that matter, of the conductor) were, at best, secondary. What mattered was nationality, and a peculiar form of nationalism. Even the present director of the New York Philharmonic, the German Kurt Masur, takes care to note, in a letter written for *An American Celebration*, that the Philharmonic has always felt a "strong responsibility" to the homegrown composer. Masur, inevitably—this was a little insurance—placed contemporary American works on his inaugural program with the Philharmonic, in 1991. (One of them was John Adams's *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, a fun piece, included in the just-issued set.)

The tug of national pride—or of a sense of national duty, or entitlement—is, of course, far from new. In one of his sprightly essays for the set's booklets, the critic Alan Rich cites the case of one George Frederick Bristow, a "violinist, composer, and new-music activist." In 1854 (that early), Bristow fired off an



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angry letter to the New York Philharmonic Society, which at the time was dominated by Germans. He accused the Society of "a systematized effort for the extinction of American music"! (This despite the fact that the orchestra had by then programmed a concert overture of Bristow's, a piece now lost to time, probably without great injury to our souls.) "Is there a Philharmonic in Germany," he thundered, "for the encouragement of American music?"

Elsewhere in the booklets, however, we learn of a contrary case, that of Edward MacDowell, who understood full well the affirmative-action mentality of some in organized music, and resented it. He once refused to allow a work of his to be included in an all-American program. He wanted his music to be judged solely for itself, performed because it was worthy, or not at all. (This tidbit comes from that stalwart critic of yesteryear, Irving Kolodin. Another of the delights of this package is that it offers a parade of critics and annotators, down through the decades. One suspects, though, that a little Bowdlerizing has gone on: Chances are that Irving Kolodin did not employ the term "African-American.")

Composers, needless to say, have always groused that performers ignore the new and nearby (which is to say, them). In truth, however, to be new and nearby is to have a leg up—is to be able to play on the guilt and ethical presumptions of performers. Some portion of what our orchestras program today is programmed only because it is a) American and b) new. This is a way, goes the thinking, of tending and extending the national heritage. But what is that heritage, exactly? Is it a heritage of greatness, or is it one of mediocrity, propped up by the patriotic, moral, and professional notions of a large segment of the musical establishment? This is a question that the Philharmonic's ten discs can help to answer.

Disc 1 opens with Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*, regarded as one of our national anthems. It does not, frankly, wear well. It is a little pompous, a little overblown, with its crashing cymbals and blustering drums. Then there is George Chadwick's *Melpomene*, a *Dramatic Overture*. It is dramatic indeed, not to say melodramatic, mostly a series of Romantic outpourings, held together by their dull sameness. The work is included here, one may guess, only because it is a handy example of late–19th-century American music. Then there is MacDowell's *Indian Suite* (spiritedly conducted by Leonard Bernstein, who gets the lion's share of the baton time in this set). It is a dated and hokey piece, though not without a certain charm and ingenuity. Then we have a classic—*the* classic,

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The question nags: Is the American musical heritage . . . worth it?

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really—of American Impressionism, *The White Peacock* by Charles Tomlinson Griffes, in a lovely performance by another composer, Howard Hanson. Following that is Ernest Schelling's *Victory Ball*, a *Fantasy for Orchestra*, once a rather big deal in American music, now no more than an historical oddity.

Along with Charles Ives's *Three Places in New England*, those pieces constitute the first of the discs. As we can see here, there is a lot of "program music"—which is to say, music meant to depict a story, or event, or thing—in this collection, as against "absolute" or "pure" music (such as any Beethoven symphony, except the "Pastoral," which is an example, if an exceptionally high one, of program music). Many of the compositions are decidedly second-rate, even student-like, hardly cause for much patriotic chest-thumping (or even, perhaps, a *Celebration*).

More Copland comes with his *Music for the Theatre*, an engaging work. (When Copland's fellow composer Roy Harris first heard it, we learn from a note by Phillip Ramey, he "jumped up excitedly, threw out his hands, and exclaimed with delight: 'But that's *whorehouse* music!'" This was 1925, and Europe was seeming farther and farther away.) There is a great deal of Copland in this set, arguably too much, given the ground to be covered and the space available. His *Lincoln Portrait*—here conducted by Bernstein and narrated by William Warfield—is an amazingly shallow, bombastic, and stupid work, incapable of impressing anyone over the age of, say, 12. His *Salón México*, on the other hand, manages to survive—though barely—the ethnomusicological earnestness that prompted it.

The French-born Edgard Varèse is represented by his *Intégrales*, performed in his memory not long after his death. Indeed, many of these performances took place for ceremonial reasons, rather than for what might be considered normal, or everyday, ones: It was this one's 75th birthday; it was the 50th anniversary of that one's death. It is possible that this says something not entirely reassuring or flattering about the quality of the music. Ned Rorem (represented in the set by his superb Third Symphony) once said that the highest compliment that had ever been paid him was when Leopold Stokowski programmed a piece of his without telling him about it. Stoki simply went ahead and scheduled it, as though Rorem were a regular composer, not needing to be present, not needing to stand and acknowledge applause, and so on. He was just a composer, a grown-up, like, oh . . . Haydn.

A few of the pieces assembled here are so poor as to be laughable. Consider *Old California* by William Grant Still (conducted by the august Frenchman Pierre Monteux, who was something of an old Californian himself, given his association with the San Francisco Symphony). It is shot through with hokum, attempting to recreate tribal chants, Spanish yelps, and the like, all for the glory of the City of Los Angeles's 160th anniversary (for which the piece was commissioned). It could serve as the accompaniment to a particularly campy film: Where are Bing, Bob, and Dorothy Lamour? William Grant Still was a better composer than revealed in this piece, an oddity that he, if he could, would probably be glad to bury.

Other works in the set, however, deserve to be more widely known than they are. Ernest Bloch's *Concerto Grosso No. 1* is an intelligent piece, bowing to a form of the past while incorporating the modern. Henry Cowell's *Hymn and*

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Fuguing Tune No. 2 displays a similar keenness, here beautifully rendered by another French conductor, Paul Paray. Carl Ruggles's *Sun-treader* is a complicated work, brilliant in a way, not one to clutch to the heart, but featuring an uncanny orchestral architecture, not unreminiscent of Bruckner. George Crumb's *Star-Child* is a similarly strange and wonderful creation. And Peter Mennin's *Concertato* is no less than a rediscovery, taut and driving.

When all is said and done—and listened to—this anthology is both hugely rewarding and hugely irritating. We may draw from it a few broad lessons. If there is any doubt, for example, that there is an American school—a distinctive style of American classical music—it is dispelled by these discs. To begin with, many of these composers were educated by the same teachers. They also borrowed from one another like mad. They socialized together, performed together, and, in some cases, slept together. The gang's all here, almost. Every listener will note certain omissions about which he will be tempted to sniff—I, for instance, might cry, "What, no Gian Carlo Menotti? No Vincent Persichetti? No John Corigliano? No Walter Piston!"—but Sedgwick Clark has done a skillful job of mining what has come to be a vast musical heritage.

Still, the question nags: What about that heritage? Is it . . . worth it? Most striking about *An American Celebration* is its relative paucity of great music: music that will endure, that can stand on its own, without the ministrations of special tenders. Musical folk, curiously enough, are not known for being especially patriotic, but they get all blood-and-soil crazy when it comes to the concert life. These discs are, in part, the product of sheer will, of an eat-your-peas sense of what is good for us. The missionary and proselytizing spirit abounds ("Are you listening, conductors around the world?" demands Clark in one of the booklets.)

This is our heritage, yes, in a way; and orchestral music in America has been as good as that in most countries during this century. Furthermore, not every piece of music that is performed and "celebrated" need be great; otherwise, the repertory available to concerts and recordings would shrink intolerably. But Americanness is not nearly enough; it is a woefully insufficient credential.

All the more reason, then, to rejoice that our musical heritage, like our larger national one, flows from every nation, and certainly from Europe. Those Germans who so agitated George Frederick Bristow—Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms—are our kin, just as much as Elliott Carter, Jacob Druckman, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. Music, as has long been observed, is a nation unto itself. And if there is pride to be taken, why not take it in that? **NR**

■ FILM ■

Non-Scoring Scorsese

JOHN SIMON

YOU have to admire Martin Scorsese's enterprising spirit. How many filmmakers have had his range of genres—from *Mean Streets* to *The Age of Innocence*, from *Raging Bull* to *Kundun*, from *The Last Waltz* to *The Last Temptation of Christ*? But in his latest, ***Bringing Out the Dead***, Scorsese attempts the impossible: The film wants to be another *Taxi Driver* and yet something altogether different.

Scorsese is best known for his exposés of urban grubbiness, big-city scum, petty criminality escalating into major crime,

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In *Bringing Out the Dead*, Martin Scorsese makes city scum self-consciously arty.

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lost souls bruised and buffeted by the megalopolis. So *Bringing Out the Dead* is about that, but to avoid repeating himself, he makes it self-consciously arty. But gritty and arty do not lend themselves to easy congeniality, even if in past times, unselfconsciously, Scorsese managed their fleeting rapprochement.

The new movie concerns EMS paramedics on the night shift on the meanest

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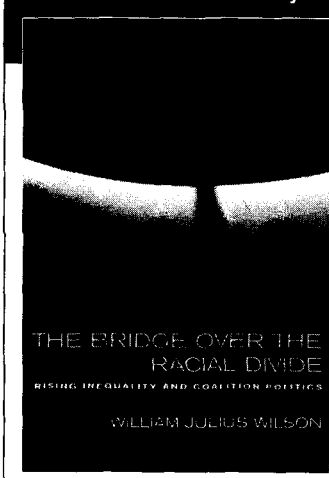

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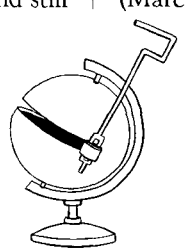
streets of pre-Giuliani New York (early '90s), from Times Square to Hell's Kitchen, during three nights and, much less conspicuously, two days. Days, in fact, barely register; in the kitchens of Hell, it is all-but-perpetual night. The film is based on a recent novel by Joe Connelly, who spent nine years as a paramedic, and was written by Paul Schrader, who wrote or co-wrote several Scorsese screenplays. Here let us reflect on the Scorsese-Schrader axis. Both grew up in, so to speak, the antechambers of Heaven: Scorsese in a religious Catholic home, Schrader in a strict Protestant one.

In *The New Yorker*, the clever Anthony Lane describes the Scorsese-Schrader collaboration as "the cool agonies of the Calvinist reacting with the operatic delirium of the Italian Catholic," which may be a bit too clever. But there is no doubt about some metaphysical baggage in the mentalities of both men, surfacing in both visual and verbal symbols. In this instance we get a crackhouse done all in red, notoriously Satan's favorite decorating scheme. So Frank, the hero, and his girl, Mary (!), will enact a Pietà scene; the fictional hospital in which much of the action takes place is called Our Lady of Perpetual Mercy. The teenaged girl for whose death in his arms Frank blames himself was called Rose, as in Rosa Mystica.

Again, when the drug dealer played by Cliff Curtis is impaled on a wrought-iron balcony railing high above the street, and welders have perilously to pry him loose, sparks fly heavenward and are shot from below like a shower of meteors joining up with Fourth of July fireworks. The wretch, seemingly roasted on a devilish spit, asks, "Isn't that beautiful?" Even a sinner can be vouchsafed a paradisiac vision.

There is more. A virginal girl called Maria gives birth to twins—think of all those Renaissance paintings of little Jesus and John the Baptist as babies gamboling together. The film begins with a long-held closeup of Nicolas Cage's (Frank's) anguished eyes, the windows of the soul; near the end, we glimpse a crazed paramedic smashing the headlights of his ambulance. Could this be Jeremiah 5:21: "O foolish people . . . which have eyes and see not"? And still more to come



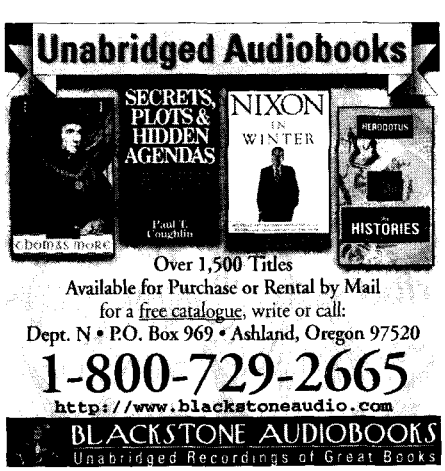
Frank Pierce is strung out almost beyond endurance by the miseries dogging his hangdog eyes: the overdosing addicts, the stabbed and the shot, the would-be suicides, and the otherwise shadowed by death—like Mr. Burke, whose heart gave out, and whom Frank, with his trusty defibrillator, brings back from the dead as the anxious family watches. At other times, as Frank wearily concludes, "It was enough that I showed up. I was a grief mop," the Messiah as a household utensil. Peter Rainer has a point in *New York* magazine: "The religio-metaphorical haze . . . gussies up the horrors." Frank will keep checking up on how Burke is doing, thus continually running into his daughter, the aforesaid Mary, keeping vigil at his bedside.

Mary is played by Patricia Arquette, in private life Mrs. Cage. Since they are two of the most unversatile and unappealing actors on screen, I would like to hope that they are perfectly mated off screen. But what can we feel for them here? He with his permanently martyred, bag-encircled gaze, his face of a maltreated nag with one or two feet in the glue factory, and his rust-encrusted voice trying to outdo a comb covered with tissue paper, as he bears the world's wretchedness on his sagging shoulders.

And she is no less a turnoff, with her blank, unimprinted countenance, her Pillsbury-doughboy figure, and foreshortened bandy legs, waddling after him like a Panzaesque troll after a pipestem Don Quixote. What a pair! They even share a nepotistic background: he as the nephew of Francis Ford Coppola, she as the granddaughter of Cliff Arquette. Even in their few happy moments, they generate no chemistry, as if waiting for a Bunsen burner to help them out with a hotfoot.

On the three successive nights, Frank rides with different partners: the portly, garrulous, esurient Larry (John Goodman); the unhinged and sadistic Tom (Tom Sizemore); and the lusty, imperturbable Marcus (Ving Rhames), who jokes and flirts with the dispatchers (the voices of Scorsese and the rapper Queen Latifah, among others). Marcus uses rousing prayer as a means of resuscitation of human flotsam such as Noel (Marc Anthony, the singer). With his dreadlocks and dreadful thirst, which he must not slake for medical reasons, Noel figures as a troubling refrain throughout. We get a rogues' gallery to do a police blotter proud, especially in the hospital scenes that labor heroically to trump the sundry hospital shows sprouting on television.

Outdoing himself, though, is hardest for Scorsese. These (pre-Giuliani, as carefully noted) mean streets must be meaner yet, the ambulance driver's inferno more infernal than the taxi driver's. So he resorts to the kind of artiness that Robert Richardson, the Merchant-Ivory and Oliver Stone cinematographer, is only too eager to deliver. There are dizzying camera movements and disorienting camera placements, as when an onrushing ambulance seemingly runs over us: Shot head on, it is somersaulted over by the camera, which, landing on its back, views the receding vehicle upside down! Many a camera has vied with the painter's brush; this may be the first one eyeing a job in the circus. It was a black day when Scorsese discovered Art with a capital A. **NR**



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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Amnesty for Spies

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 17

It was bandied about last week that if President Clinton could grant the Puerto Rican community a pardon of the 14 terrorists, why couldn't he do something for the Jewish community? Like what? Grant a pardon to Jonathan Pollard.

Several years ago, after I addressed an annual gathering of Jewish New Yorkers who did me the honor of an award, a questioner at the end of the hour asked whether I agreed with her that Jonathan Pollard should be pardoned. I said no, I hoped, on the contrary, that he would be executed. There was some dismay on the part of the questioner, shared with most of the audience, I judged from the general (though by no means unanimous) moaning over my reply. In subsequent months, the case for Jonathan Pollard was widely advanced. What it said, essentially, was that 1) the information stolen from the Navy by Pollard was not really critical in importance, and 2) in any event, it was conveyed not to the Soviet Union, which was our enemy, but to Israel, which is our friend.

The gentrification of Mr. Pollard's offense was interrupted by a massive article last January in *The New Yorker* by Seymour Hersh which 1) described in devastating detail the importance of the information stolen by Pollard; 2) explained how the information even in the hands of an ally was greatly dangerous; and 3) revealed that the transaction had been commercial. Pollard was indeed pro-Israel. But his services were being paid for in cash. And anyway, United States law does not distinguish between giving state secrets to Moscow and giving them to Luxembourg.

The plea to let Pollard go was renewed at the time of the Wye Accords a year ago, when Mr. Clinton pressed upon Arafat and Netanyahu one of the episodic détentes. When it was learned that Mr. Clinton was leaning favorably to the request by Netanyahu to release Pollard, word got out that the head of the CIA and (reputedly) other high officials in the American intelligence establishment would resign in protest. Clinton backed down. The gravity of espionage is wilting.

And at another level, with the end of the Cold War the practice of treason has sprouted little retroactive buds of derring-do and childlike wantonness. The climax in the prettification of dishonor came last week with the preliminary revelation of the Mitrokhin Archive (documents from a Russian KGB official who defected to the West), about which Prof. Christopher Andrew, a Cambridge scholar, has written a book. He identifies a British spy whose description, age, activity, and motives are as from a novel by Agatha Christie.

Her name, if you can stand it, is—Melita Norwood.

How old is she?—Eighty seven.

Where does she live? In . . . Bexleyheath! Forsooth. That's southeast London.

How was she dressed, when last seen? "In a wide-collared lavender floral print blouse and gray tweed skirt."

Where did she do it—whatever it was that she did?

Well, she worked as a secretary for something called the British Non-Ferrous Metals Research Association, which is evidently the home of the tube-alloys project.

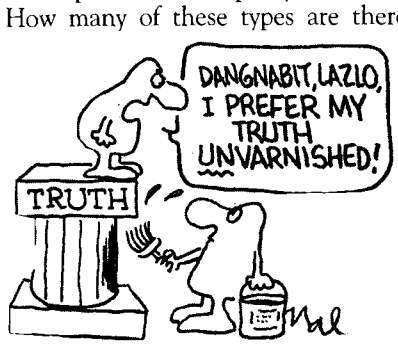
What on earth is the tube-alloys project?

It is a code name for nuclear-weapons research. Dear Mrs. Norwood, year after year, copied secret documents developed by British nuclear researchers and passed them along to the Soviet Union.

Why did she do that?

Because, she explained, after the war she concluded that Stalin was giving "ordinary people food and fares which they could afford, a good education, and a health service." Moreover, the Communist government was doing this for the people "at great cost." Mrs. Norwood did not describe that cost as including some 20 million dead of starvation and torture. She said only that she thought it important to provide a "counterbalance" to capitalism, and wrong for the West to have a monopoly on nuclear weapons. "In the war," she explained to a television interviewer, "the Russians were on our side, and it was unfair to them that they shouldn't be able to develop their own weaponry."

How many of these types are there around? Many more, successive revelations seem to be telling us, than Sen. McCarthy ever suspected. The Mitrokhin Archive will "unmask" a dozen more Britons who worked for Soviet intelligence including, writes Warren Hoge of the *New York Times*, "a former Scotland Yard officer and a person described tantalizingly by the author as 'a prominent public figure who is now dead.'"



But he didn't die on the gibbet. And no one will harm a hair of Norwood's head. And we do not know how many plans were ruined, security precautions thrown to the wind, lives imperiled by the activity of Jonathan Pollard, one of only a half-dozen of the family of Aldrich Ameses who thought it appropriate—for whatever reason—to write their own policy on national secrets.

Not-So-Much Fun And Games

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 21

The diligent reader will have learned that computer users have "websites." These are valuable property if the composition is the kind of thing that rolls quickly off the tongue, summoning a commercial product. For instance, we must assume that www.cocacola.com is the website of Coca Cola, Inc.

What happened in the past year or so is that wildcat web drillers went out exploring and found that there were sites here and there that logical owners had failed to notice and to register. The results are various, and can be commercially valuable. The man who got cocacola.com, assuming Coke hadn't got there first, might offer it up for sale for, say, $1 million.

There has been, as one might expect, a political exploitation of this first-come–first-served protocol. Thoughtful, civilized arrangements would presuppose that abrahamlincoln.com would belong only to Abe, but in fact it wouldn't; not if he, or his mother, didn't get around to reserving it for him. But suppose they took care of that sequestration, but forgot to register abelincoln.com? Or abraham-linc.com? Or any variety of the same?

What has mostly been noticed is the young man who got in there and registered gwbush.com. Political junkies would hit upon gwbush.com simply roaming around the Bush name. But the cyber-

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world makes it more tempting than that. Because around the word "bush" what you get, and what is a superb epistemological convenience, is "link" sites. What your computer is telling you is that if you are interested in Bush, you may be interested in other sites that are centered about the word "bush." You are given, e.g., bushwatch, georgebush2000, littlegeorgebush, bushcampaignhq, and bushlite.com.

So what did the original prankster do with his gwbush?

He amused himself, and not a few others, by conjuring a narrative. It goes in part as follows:

"May: Life begins at 40! Gov. Bush will raise the age at which juveniles can be tried as adults to 40.

"June: Bush turns himself in for past drug crimes.

"July: As Gov. Bush sits in jail, awaiting trial for past drug crimes, he is flooded with letters of solidarity from other prisoners of the drug war."

Well, Karl Rove, Gov. Bush's top political strategist, decided this kind of thing was more nearly scandal than fun. The very old question arose, What are the limits of free speech done at the expense of someone else? Obviously Gov. Bush is not going to sue over the misrepresentations of gwbush. But then are there steps to be taken to limit the damage?

Well, apparently the Bush people thought they should inquire to see what other Bush-related potential website titles were lying around. To the heated dismay of another cyber-swashbuckler looking about to see what more damage might be done, the Bush people got hold of, and have now tucked safely out of harm's way, www.bushsucks.com, www.bushblows.com, and www.bushbites.com. If you tap out those letters, it is complained by the frustrated garbage collector, you are led to the orthodox Bush Presidential Campaign site. The infuriated hacker who evidently looked for those titles just too late, settled for bushsuckz.com, whence he will fire off any darts or stink bombs not already used up by the gwbush.com man. But he is very angry and urges viewers to protest Mr. Bush's constriction of the dartboard thought essential to a spirited political campaign.

Now the other side has its own problems. Algore.com was spirited to safety early on, but the scavengers have come up with other titles, for instance albore.com. That finding gives such "news" items as Gore Under Fire for Russian Problem, White House Brief on Russia Money Probe, and then Letterman-like fusillades: "Top Ten Signs Al Gore is Loosening Up" begins with "Appeared on *Larry King Live* without pants" and ends with "Loosens tie during sex."

It is very old sport, and no one can deny there is fun in it. Visitors to the home of the Prince Regent (later George IV) in Brighton will see on display cartoons about the royal family which even in our jaded age seem raw, and back then there were such things as criminal libel, which has disappeared from the American scene. But we are reminded, for the 100th time, of the defenselessness of people who are willing to make a try for public office. It has to be wrong to suppose that a belief in free speech authorizes www.bushsuckz.com.

A Return to Isolationism?

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 15

THE same day's news brought exclamations of indignation from Sen. Mitch McConnell and President Bill Clinton. Sen. McConnell looked Sen. John McCain in the face and asked, *Who* is corrupt? His point rested on a logical formulation. If there is corruption in the Senate owing to financial contributions ("soft money"), then somebody has to be corrupt. Who? Sen. McCain declined to specify, and probably could not if he had to. But it is a fine example of syllogistic vulnerability. The proper formulation would be: Where substantial funds are year after year in hot pursuit of genial legislative or regulatory treatment, one reasonably assumes that the donors are getting satisfactions, even if we can't make out individual instances of compliance. But as a polemical point, McConnell's was pretty good, a version of put up or shut up.

At the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, Bill Clinton was having a fit. He declared that the failure of the Senate to ratify his test-ban treaty was a blow against the children of the world, an incitement to nuclear holocaust, and a spiteful, vindictive, self-mutilating, politically motivated tragedy. Of course, it isn't any of these things, but it was a conservative—quite conservative—reaction against the kind of wistful internationalism that suggests that wispy treaty arrangements are guarantors of desired ends. McConnell should have been on the scene at the White House to ask: What country is now likelier to test nuclear weapons, the treaty having been defeated?

What might Clinton have responded? At the heavyweight level we are talking about China, Iran, Pakistan, and India. But, of course, three of the four countries already have nuclear weapons, and for them, useful testing would have to do with delivery systems, which are not banned by the defeated treaty. If Iran found itself short of a nuclear weapon, pending an actual test, it is inconceivable that that arrogant government would be restrained by a treaty commitment. India and Pakistan would have no greater difficulty in proceeding with tests they thought vital than they had in developing the nuclear weapons they exploded last year, in defiance of international understandings.

At the small-power end there is, of course, primarily North Korea. We have now almost 50 years' experience with two generations of North Korean leadership. Except that North Koreans do not laugh, they would all be laughing, in Pyongyang, at the suggestion that they would be deterred by a treaty which they haven't even signed, let alone ratified. And the list goes on.

The suggestion that what we have here is a revival of isolationism is drastically to misunderstand the motives of the senators who voted nay. It is useful to recall that it was the vote of Republican senators that was responsible for passing the thoroughly non-isolationist GATT agreement. It was the preponderant Republican approval of the Senate that backed our intervention in Iraq under President Bush.

What the Republicans react against is the restoration of one-worldism, which doesn't work and which could freeze genuine progress aimed at enhanced national security. As the senators contemplated this new prospective restriction, they'd have done well to reflect on the ABM Treaty. That was done in 1972 and now, 27 years later, we are hindered in moving energetically on anti-missile development by its provisions. Even Ronald Reagan, the SDI visionary, quailed at rescinding a treaty that stood in the way of full progress in his enterprise. The coils of useless, even harmful treaties, aimed mostly at obliging internationalist superstitions, tend to harden. Although there is no earthly reason not to test anti-missiles in space, we don't do so because of the continuing overhang of the ABM.

And tomorrow, if there were a felt need to test weapons for whatever reason, the proposed treaty, which was promulgated without even a sunset provision, would keep us from considering our primary obligation to look after the national security. It is hardly isolationist to reject international entanglements which prejudice our own liberties to act, among other things, to continue scurrying about the world, helping out in such places as England, France, Germany, Italy, Lebanon, the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Bosnia, Kosovo, Grenada, Haiti, Cuba, and Somalia, when the going gets tough for them.

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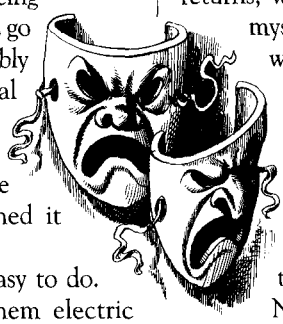
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

MANY societies have made life miserable for their citizens, but none has ever driven them crazy. A few, such as Louis-Philippe's self-satisfied bourgeois France, may have bored them to distraction, but sturdy sanity has always held sway among the commonality even when their rulers fell into hereditary fits and had sobriquets like "the Simple" and "the Mad."

Enter America, where presidential candidates dare not admit to seeing a psychiatrist and the masses go on daytime TV to boast volubly about "seeking professional help." Of all democracy's unintended consequences, this one takes majority rule where no one ever imagined it could go.



Driving people crazy is easy to do. You don't have to give them electric shocks or put them in solitary, all you have to do is make them doubt the evidence of their senses until they whimper, "What the hell is going on?" This is where America is now. There's a war on, and it's not in any of the places likely to become Bill Clinton's next Ruritania du jour. It's in our heads, and the enemy is the unrelenting flux of American life. Every day is *Gaslight*, and we're Ingrid Bergman.

Advertisers used to pound home their messages in the simplest possible way, but watching some of today's TV commercials is an experience akin to reading *Beowulf*. There's the one showing a car sitting in the middle of the desert while an Irish tenor voice sings "Home on the Range" in Italian. In another, a geeky guy sits down alone at a set-up chess board and nervously wipes sweat from his face while a clock ticks away menacingly in the background. After a moment, a driverless car pulls up beside him, and he rises and walks off.

At least we can tell these are car commercials. More puzzling are the ones that seem to have no sponsor. These are in black-and-white and feature a man in a white dinner jacket with a satanic goatee who fires off sneering, mocking questions along the lines of, "So you think you did the clever thing, do you? Who would want *you* for an employer?"

Are they trying to convince us to keep up with the sadomasochistic Joneses? Do they believe the economy is so good that we might be willing to buy the product to figure out the ad? It's probably another online trader, but either they don't say or else the name goes by so quickly that it doesn't register. Then, after the program returns, we keep on trying to solve the mystery of the commercial until we forget what's going on in the mystery we're watching.

In a column written shortly after the death of Vincent Price, Alston Chase said that because good guys mumble, Price's perfect diction had gotten him typecast as a villain. Now all movie dialogue consists of bad diction drowned out by background noise. Characters mumble while revving engines, chopping wood, sharpening swords, hammering anvils, and operating machinery. Movies used to muffle background noises when characters spoke, but today nothing is muffled except their lines. Much of this is meant to convey the stress and strain and general unpleasantness under which working-class characters live, but Joan Crawford waitressed, barmaided, and factory-girled her way through dozens of movies in which we could understand every word she said. Today's cinematic noise has the same purpose as the rock music that SWAT teams play for holed-up criminals.

The desire to leave one's mark by cluttering up the works has been the motivation behind petty vandalism since time immemorial. More recently, it has manifested itself in the plangent wish, "I want to be a part of history," uttered by grief junkies on pilgrimages to sidewalk memorials for dead celebrities. Now the ante has been upped to a constitutional guarantee of the right to time-travel. Edmund Morris shows us how to do it in *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*, but Morris is not the first author to hit on the idea of driving his readers crazy by inserting himself in a book.

In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, a novel of Victorian England published in 1970, author John Fowles imitates the omniscient Victorian novelist's technique of stopping the action cold to deliver homilies. This is no more than what most Victorian writers did, but Fowles goes them one better by climbing into the story as an unnamed character who trails the hero around.

When the two share a train compartment, the author-character confesses to a writing block and studies the dozing hero, thinking: "Now what am I going to do with you?" At the end, he waits outside the Rosetti house while Charles goes in to persuade Sarah to marry him. Does she or doesn't she? We never find out, because the chortling author-character admits that he has no idea what happens. He supplies the book with two endings, either of which we may choose provided we can find someone to turn the pages for us after they put us into our strait jackets.

Now that Morris has gone Fowles one better by climbing into a biography, it's only a matter of time before the teachers' lobby puts pressure on textbook publishers to leave blank spaces in history books so that pupils can insert their own names:

"That first terrible winter, _____ told William Bradford that he or she was starving."

Alternatively, the publishers could just toss in an extra personage that every pupil can identify with.

"Lewis, Clark, Sacajawea, and I stood overlooking the mighty river."

"After I checked with Travis and Bowie I turned to Davy and said, Davy, I said . . . . "

The possibilities for political correctness would be endless:

"'For Goddess' sake, stop it! You violent Southern white man!'" I shouted as I grabbed Preston Brooks's cane and wadded my pelisse under Senator Sumner's bleeding head."

Not to mention the possibilities for building self-esteem:

"I was in the play that night, so when John Wilkes Booth leapt to the stage I tackled him and broke his leg."

Ingrid, you don't know what gaslight is. All you had to worry about was a switched picture. **NR**

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The key to everything we do is reducing the cost of homeownership. It's working.

We have one job at Fannie Mae. One mission. One purpose. To do whatever we can to lower the cost of homeownership. And our work makes a big difference. Because by cutting costs, more families can qualify for a home loan. For every ten dollars that can be saved on monthly mortgage payments, an additional 250,000 families can become first-time home buyers. Fannie Mae saves home buyers from several thousand dollars to a high of as much as $26,800 over the life of their loan. That's real savings. And more homeowners.

The country's homeownership rate hasn't reached its historic high of over 66 percent by chance. Together with our lenders, we've helped make homeownership more affordable for more families than at any time in our nation's history.

Keeping mortgage rates low is just one of the ways Fannie Mae is dedicated to helping families achieve the American Dream. And last year alone, Fannie Mae and our lending partners helped over four million families.

Lower rates. Lower costs. Increasing homeownership opportunities. Fannie Mae at work.

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